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"PUNISHMENT and vengeance alone remain, and God forbid that they should ever be forgotten. But the punishment of enormous offenders will not be the less severe or the less exemplary, when it is not threatened at a moment when we have it not in our power to execute our threats."

BURKE.

## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

"A thousand things happen in war, as in civil life, that are incomprehensible," wrote Voltaire. One of these incomprehensible things is that in the autumn of 1914 the Germans did not take Paris and Calais. Another is that at the end of the fourth year of the war the combined efforts of America, England, and France do not drive the Germans out of Belgium and France.

Attention this week is centred on the resumption of the Austrian offensive against the Italians, who are being assisted by British troops. Strong attacks have been made on a front of over 90 miles, and the Austrians are credited with putting into the battle over 70 divisions; practically the whole of their best forces. They have gained so far nothing substantial to correspond to this effort, for nowhere have they succeeded in breaking the Italian line. Our Allies counter-attacked so vigorously as to secure on the first day as many as 3,000 prisoners.

The attack in the region of the mountains for 20 miles on each side of the Brenta was critical, for it meant securing the issue to the plains by the river valleys. Here the enemy were stopped by Tuesday, our own men with the Italian gunners playing a great part in the defence of the Asiago plateau which offers the easiest approach from the Austrian side. In the mountains generally, the Allies are holding their own, and the main point of anxiety is in the region of the Piave. The Austrians have succeeded in taking a part of the Montello, an important and isolated ridge on the west bank of the Piave, and are pressing on the lower part of the river. Here they managed to throw several bridges across, but their progress is slow, and effective resistance is shown by the amount of prisoners the Italians have gained. Later, heavy rains flooded the

river and swept away many of the bridges so that the position of the Austrians across the river is decidedly perilous.

It was freely suggested that the Germans did not take Rheims because it was a heap of ruins, and they did not want it. They had a try at the salient, of which it forms the head, on Tuesday evening with three divisions on a front of about 13 miles, and were utterly defeated by the French. To the west of Rheims their storm troops never reached the French positions; in the environs of the city they suffered heavy losses, and to the east of it their small gain was quickly recovered by counter-attacks. The attempt to profit by the growing darkness—the infantry advanced at 9 p.m.—is something of a novelty in recent warfare, and not a successful novelty.

The Germans so love their Fatherland and its Kultur that the Government has already taken stringent measures to prevent their leaving them after the war. While we are passing an Act to encourage and assist emigration, the German Government has passed a law that no German subject with property valued at £1,500 will be permitted to leave the country within five years of the end of the war without paying in advance his personal taxes to the end of the five-year period, or giving security to the extent of 20 per cent. of his property. Not only are Imperial taxes to be paid in advance by the intending emigrant, but State taxes for five years are to be paid in advance, together with a further sum to cover local taxes for the same period. Any person who gives up permanent residence in Germany, with intent to evade his liability to taxation, may be punished with five years imprisonment, a fine of £5,000, and loss of civil rights, a penalty extended to his wife and children. Happy Germans!

Germany after the war, will, therefore, be a huge prison, with soldiers, police, and spies, posted at all the railway stations, frontiers, and ports, to prevent its loving subjects escaping to lands where Kultur is unknown, or at least not practised. For a wealthy German the payment of five years' Imperial State and local taxes would be a cheap price for escape from the Fatherland. But supposing the money paid, where is the German, who remains wealthy at the end of the war, to fly to? Neither Britain, nor any British Colony, nor the United States, nor Brazil, nor Argentina, nor Japan, nor China, nor France, nor Italy, nor Norway, nor Denmark, nor Holland, will receive him. He might, perhaps, nestle down in Stockholm or Helsingfors or Caraccas or Porto Rico; possibly in Spain or Siberia. As for the middle-class German, should he attempt to escape without leaving his money behind him, prison, disfranchisement, and fine will be meted out to him.

Whenever Molière found a good thing, he appropriated it, saying, "C'est mon bien: je le prends où je le trouve." Whenever we find a good thing in one of our contemporaries, we reproduce it, for no two papers have the same public. In *The New Statesman* of last week our palate was tickled by the following sentence with reference to our two protectors of

public virtue: "Lot's wife was a lady who looked round once too often to see what was happening to the forty-seven thousand. Let Mr. Billing and Mr. Bottomley beware. Their interest in the Cities of the Plain will turn them into pillars of salt a thousand years before it turns them into pillars of Society." We wish we had said that. So now we have: and we thank, with brief thanksgiving, the writer, whoever he may be.

We reflected last week upon the appointment of Sir William Babbie, with his Mesopotamian record, to be the Medical Adviser of the Adjutant-General. We should like to know who is now responsible for the provision of medical hospitals in Palestine and Mesopotamia. The following extract from the letter of a wounded officer shows that the same disgraceful negligence continues in that branch of the Army Medical Service:—"We have all been landed at —. It is just a collection of tents in the desert between Palestine and Egypt: there are a few shanties, and the railway; otherwise nothing. And the hospital itself is pretty awful—full of rules, and flies, and sand. So just picture me here with no clothes but one shirt, one pair of socks, and one pair of trousers. There is plenty of cold water for washing oneself, and you have to wash your own clothes."

The Army Medical Service on the Western Front, and behind the lines, and at the base, is as near perfection as such an organisation can be. The hospitals in this country run by voluntary nursing and private money are, most of them, charming, and as well managed as possible. But some of the Military Hospitals under the War Office, both for officers and privates, are very badly run, both as regards cleanliness and comfort. The Military Hospital at Chatham for privates, and that at Reading for officers, are very far from being what they ought to be. Seeing that we are spending some seven millions a day, this is intolerable. If Sir William Babbie will not see to this, Parliament ought to appoint a Commission of competent and disinterested persons, to make a tour of the Military Hospitals and report. The difficulty, of course, is to arrange a series of surprise visits. Window-dressing is an art not confined to city magnates.

The answer which Mr. Macpherson gave to Sir Henry Craik about Sir William Babbie's appointment as Inspector of Medical Services (not, as we stated, Medical Adviser), is positively astounding. Mr. Henry Craik asked whether it was not the case that the finding of the Mesopotamia Commission made no reflection whatever upon Sir William Babbie, and the Under-Secretary for War said, "Not only is that so, but they recommended that he should be re-employed." The Commission found that "Sir William Babbie in his evidence impressed us as an officer of ability and knowledge, but we do not think that he brought these qualities sufficiently to bear upon the task before him. He accepted obviously insufficient medical provision without protest, and without any adequate effort to improve it. He cannot therefore be held blameless." Sir Alfred Keogh, in his evidence, said, "I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the medical arrangements connected with the Army in India" (for which Sir W. Babbie was long responsible) "have been for years and years perfectly disgraceful." If these words are not "reflection" we know not the meaning of the term.

Mr. W. F. Roch is one of the cleverest and most courageous of the younger Members of Parliament. But ten years in the House of Commons do not seem to have cured him of the ingenuousness of youth. He actually expects, and in a sense demands, that there shall be a correspondence between the facts of the military situation and the statements of Ministers and the Government press. Ever since the wars of Louis the Fourteenth to "lie like a bulletin" has been a proverbial expression, though Napoleon improved

upon the methods of the Grand Monarch, who only claimed sham victories, by taking all the credit of real victories to himself. We, like Mr. Roch, have been bewildered by the conflicting statements as to the numbers of the opposing armies on the Western Front, and of the enormous enemy losses. How can the Headquarters of either army really know what have been the losses of the enemy? When we read that the enemy has lost so many thousands, we know it must be pure guess-work; for who can count the dead upon the stricken field? Each side, however, ought to know its own losses in men and guns. Are we told, even approximately, the correct figures of our own losses?

Brigadier General Croft stated no more than the truth when he said that the Government had not only failed to calculate the possibility of the Russian collapse—Mr. Lloyd George actually thought the Revolution would increase the Russian fighting capacity—but when it was an accomplished fact they neglected all steps to counteract its effect. When in September, 1917, we pointed out that the fall of Riga meant the wiping out of Russia, we were threatened with "Dora," while the Government buried its head deeper in the sand-dunes of the Pas de Calais. No attempt was made to save the Baltic provinces and Finland from the German grip, and no advantage was taken of the German pre-occupation in the East to make a big forward movement in the West.

Mr. Bonar Law's statement in moving for a vote of credit of £500,000,000 on Tuesday is the most comforting we have yet had. We do not pretend to grasp the financial part of it, beyond the facts that with domestic expenditure we are spending 7½ millions a day, and that the estimates have not been exceeded. As in six weeks, when Parliament adjourns, we must have another and a fuller financial statement we do not see much use in trying now to find a clue through a labyrinth of thousands of millions. Mr. McKenna was right in gibbeting the Minister of National Service as one of the worst offenders in the matter of waste and extravagance. His office is absurdly over-staffed, and his representatives keep on passing men through the Army into the pensioners at an alarming rate. We know of a city clerk, subject to epileptic fits, who was torn from his office, thrust into the Army, and discharged after three days with a pension.

The cheerful points in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech are that in the months of April and May, for the first time, "the world construction of ships exceeded the destruction. There is now, therefore, no danger whatever, so far as human foresight can see, of this country being starved into submission." The next "bull point" is that the Americans are not coming; they have come: they are there, and are still pouring into France in an ever broadening stream. Of course, all these Americans are not for the fighting line, and all the soldiers are not yet fully trained. But the vital and anxious problem of reserves is solved, and, as Mr. Law said truly, it is now a battle of reserves. Our financial anxiety is also lightened by the fact that the Americans have agreed to take our place as financier-general of the Entente Powers. We gather that England will not make any further loans to the Allies, but will give them credits for munitions and coal which they buy from us. Loans of money will be made by the United States.

Sir Laming Evans, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Munitions Department, has what is vulgarly called "a nerve." He admits that accounts involving millions are daily handled by "flappers," who do not know one side of a balance sheet from the other. He agrees that a large sum of money was paid to a contractor twice over, but exults in the fact that there was no loss because the contractor returned the second cheque. The public will hardly be satisfied by the substitution of flippant for flapper finance. We know



that the difficulty of finding people who understand the two sides of a balance-sheet is very great, even in the City and amongst financiers of repute. But no proper attempt has been made to secure the services of chartered accountants and their trained clerks. We know of several who have been hustled into the Army, and who might have saved the nation millions a day.

Who is to control efficiently this vast daily expenditure? Mr. Gibson Bowles says the House of Commons, and clamours for a General Election. But a new House of Commons, elected by universal suffrage, will probably be less competent and less willing than the present one to curtail expenditure, for behind the electorate will stand an army of salaried officials with votes. Others say that the Treasury should control expenditure, as theoretically it should; but how is the Treasury to do it? The only people who can intelligently, and therefore effectively, control the details (not the policy) of expenditure are chartered accountants and their trained clerks. If anyone wishes to test the truth of this assertion, let him select a high official at the Treasury, show him the balance-sheet of a large industrial company, and ask him to explain its items of debit and credit. The only cure for the present waste of public money is to supply the Treasury and all the spending departments with a staff of chartered accountants, and let these experts be withdrawn from the Army, where they are probably controlling the accounts of a regiment or at best of a division.

Sir George Cave, in welcoming the British prisoners now interned in Holland, genially congratulated them on returning to "the upper regions." The Germans have no sense of humour, and this jest has touched them on the raw. Their newspapers and officials are foaming and spluttering with rage, and say that if the German prisoners returned from Britain to Holland were so indecent as to open their mouths, they could tell "another tale." So they could, but they dare not; we should be sorry for them when they returned to the Fatherland at the end of the war, if they were to tell the world how well they have been treated in England. We are glad that Sir George Cave had his little joke: English Ministers are not the lackeys of a War Lord. But how about Sir George Cave's return journey? The Germans could hardly refuse him a permit through Belgium, and it would be so much better if he returned by Calais and Dover. The Dutch route is a nasty, queasy, cold sea, and so full of mines sown by a careless British Navy.

The letter of Mrs. Leverton Harris in the *Times* of Thursday gives an explanation of her visits to a German officer at Wakefield Camp, which is more creditable to her heart than her head. It is certainly imprudent of the wife of a member of the Government to continue a pre-war friendship with a German family whilst the war lasts, and it was very foolish to endeavour to obtain anything in the nature of special privilege by a relaxation of military prison rules. Far more improper was the conduct of an official in the Home Office, who backed the lady's request by a letter to the Commandant. However, no relaxation of rules was granted, and no interviews took place without the presence of a British officer. We trust this unfortunate incident will be a warning to all those who are disposed to interpret literally the precept to love their enemies.

The English are an inconsistent people, as ignorant of their history, as the French are supposed to be ignorant of geography. Here they are busily engaged in covering up with sand-bags and precious timber the statue of a King, against whom they waged war for seven years, and whom they finally, after a mock trial, beheaded. On the other hand, a clamour is being raised for the ignominious removal of the statues of the Kings who saved them from the son and grandson of the King whom they beheaded. Why should King George be supposed to be partial to the Kaiser, because he is his cousin? Do people generally love their relations? The hatred of cousins is often very bitter,

and James was driven from his Kingdom by his two daughters and his nephew, who was also his son-in-law.

The last remnants of freedom of contract and personal liberty are fast disappearing. The bureaucrats, hand-in-hand with the trade unionists, march irresistibly on towards absolute power. The new Trade Boards Bill is pleasantly described by Mr. Roberts, the Minister of Labour, as a simplification of procedure, as all stretches of arbitrary power are called. What it does is to give the Minister of Labour power by "special order" to set up a board to fix wages and hours for any trade he likes, and (still more important) to recommend, or shall we say dictate? to any Government Department that its employees should be paid more for less work. The procedure for setting up a trade board to fix wages has been by Provisional Order Bill and Provisional Order Confirmation Bill. But these take time, and involve inquiry into the facts, besides giving those tiresome persons, the employers, the opportunity of defending their pockets. The "special order" of the Minister for Labour is certainly simpler, and quicker, and obviates the confusion of hearing both sides of a case.

Mr. Prothero told General Croft that the Board of Agriculture had arranged for the sowing of 5,000 acres of beet in Nottinghamshire in 1920. But 5,000 acres of beet will produce, under the best conditions, only 10,000 tons of sugar, whilst our pre-war consumption was 1,800,000 tons. Is not this trifling with a very important question? We publish an article in another part of the *Review* on sugar, in which full justice is done to the wise and prompt policy of Mr. McKenna in buying large cargoes of sugar in 1914, and thus preventing a boom and a slump in an article of necessity. But it is time the Government made up its mind as to its sugar policy, instead of refusing to do anything till after the war. It is easy enough to put a prohibitive duty on German manufactured sugar: but how are you to prevent cheap beet sugar reaching us from neutral parts? In Bohemia they look upon sugar almost as a bye-product, and they grow the beets, not so much for the sugar results, as for the rotation of crops, and the value of the tops for cattle food. If beet sugar fell to 3s. or 4s. per cwt. the Bohemians would probably still grow beets, for the above reasons.

We do not know how far the Authorities have gone in the Cippenham business: but if no irrevocable step has been taken, we hope that Colonel Du Pre will persevere, and that his opposition will be supported by his colleagues in Parliament. In normal times, before a public authority can appropriate private land, a Bill must be passed by Committees of both Houses of Parliament. The Committees hear counsel and witnesses and all interested parties on the merits and demerits of the scheme and the amount of money involved. The fact that under the Defence of the Realm Act all these inquiries are dispensed with ought to make the Government particularly careful how they use or abuse their despotic powers. The Cippenham scheme rests on the *ipse dixit* of Sir William Weir, who cannot realise that he will ruin for ever the beautiful district round about Stoke Pogis and Burnham Beeches.

In what is humorously called the War Cabinet the Secretary of State for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, India, and the Colonies, have no seats. Do people realise that Lord Milner, the most important and perhaps the ablest of our Ministers, has been withdrawn from the Cabinet? What is the use of the War Cabinet, and what does it do except talk? Now a new Sub-Cabinet or Committee on Home Affairs, headed by Sir George Cave, has been formed. Government in this country is fast degenerating into a chaos of committees. The times are out of joint: the people are growing peevish, suspicious, hysterical; what they want is a victory, by sea or land.

## CABINET GOVERNMENT.

FOR over two centuries England has been ruled by the system known as Cabinet Government. After the Restoration Charles and his Ministers, who were really his servants, formed a sort of executive committee of the Privy Council, and we have all heard of the Cabal of five. It was not, as may be imagined, a particularly serious or industrious body, and Pope wrote of the Duke of Buckingham that he was

"Just as gay at council, in a ring  
Of mimic statesmen, and their merry King."

Charles and James used to take the chair at these meetings: but in the reign of William, a Lord President of Council was appointed, an official who survives to this day, but with different functions. The word Cabinet seems to have been first used in the reign of Queen Anne—Swift refers to Cabinet meetings—though it was doubtful who had the right to attend them. When the Queen was on her death-bed the Dukes of Somerset and Argyll appeared unbidden at the Cabinet meeting as Privy Counsellors, and "upset the apple-cart" of Lord Bolingbroke. Mr. Wortley Montagu, the husband of Lady Mary, writes of a Cabinet Council of twelve being summoned to make arrangements for the coronation of George I.

All through the eighteenth century, until the advent of the younger Pitt, the number of the Cabinet seems to have been round about the figure twelve; though after the fall of Walpole parties and principles became so confused that Burke wrote a pamphlet to explain "the double Cabinet," by which he meant that some Cabinet Ministers were ciphers. The younger Pitt's Cabinet in 1784 was composed of eight, in which he was the only commoner. The number was shortly afterwards expanded to twelve, of whom at least half were peers: and about twelve it remained until near the end of the nineteenth century. Lord Beaconsfield increased the number, and Gladstone and Lord Salisbury kept on adding, until under Mr. Balfour it reached the number of twenty. The members of the Government outside the Cabinet, but in Parliament, were about the same number; so that the Administration came to number about forty. Ever since the failure of George III. to rule personally, that is since 1784, Cabinet Government has had two distinct features: the proceedings of the Cabinet were secret; and its responsibility was joint and indivisible. It is of Lord Melbourne in 1841 that the story was told that at the close of a Cabinet meeting he placed his back against the door, and said: "Now is the duty going to raise the price of corn, or is it not? It doesn't matter which we say, so long as we all say the same."

Ever since the first Coalition under Mr. Asquith in 1915, the Cabinet system, as meaning government by an executive committee of the predominant party in the House of Commons, has been suspended. There is what is called the War Cabinet of six Ministers without portfolios, and outside there are all the Parliamentary chiefs of the great departments, and some eighty more or less subordinate members of Government. Parties are supposed to be non-existent, though in the last three years more Radical and Socialistic measures have been passed than in the preceding half-century. Lord Middleton drew attention on Wednesday to the present anomalous and chaotic system, and it was agreed on all hands that the old Cabinet had disappeared for ever. Long before the war a prying and powerful Press had pushed open the secret door, and all the world is now admitted to the once sacred presence. Publicity is fatal to prestige, and we can see no difference between a Cabinet Minister and the chief of a department who is outside. The multifarious and ever-growing demands of democracy upon the legislature and administration make it impossible to confine the Cabinet within compassable limits. Nor is it possible in our judgment to reconstruct a workable

system of Government so long as the war lasts. There ought to be an omnipotent War Committee, call it a Cabinet or not, of which the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, and the Foreign Secretary should be members, and, of course, the Prime Minister. We agree with Lord Middleton that neither the leader of the House of Commons nor of the House of Lords, should be a member of the War Committee or Cabinet, as the management of a deliberative assembly is incompatible with concentration of mind on problems of urgency and anxiety. It would be better if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were excluded from the War Committee, as in time of war the business of the Finance Minister is to find the money required for the Army and Navy, a task from which he should not be distracted by discussion. Much of the present difficulty and dissatisfaction arises from the determination of certain politicians to push through schemes of socialistic and even revolutionary character under the confusion of war instead of working to win the war, or at least, waiting till their proposals can be calmly examined. After the war it may be hoped that the present Government of 94 will be reduced: but it is bound to remain very numerous. In such conditions there must be an inner Cabinet, consisting of the more important and influential Ministers. The dangers of democracy, as proved by all experience, are anonymous impulse and fugacious responsibility. The one thing needful, if we are to be saved from anarchy and civil war, is that there should be a small and prominent body of public men, trained and tested by political service, who shall be answerable to Parliament and the nation for legislation proposed by the Government, and for an administration which is rapidly invading every nook and cranny of private life.

The present arrangement is temporary and transitional; but might it not be made a little less patently absurd? What reason is there for the exclusion of the great Secretaries of State? If we are really in earnest about adopting the Federal System, of course the whole structure of government will have to be changed. It is not impossible that, if the House of Commons should be split into groups, and no constant majority attainable, we may be driven to separate the Executive from the legislature, as in the United States.

## WANTED: A NEW DISRAELI.

A LEADING statesman has remarked that as a nation we take a gloomy joy in self-depreciation, and it is indisputable that just now the Conservative Party has not escaped its share of such an experience. It is doomed, say the waverers, its watchwords are everywhere repudiated; its only future, ignominious enough, is that of nerveless dependence on the favours of Labour. In these circumstances, it is opportune to recall the memory of that inspired and illustrious patriot who gave fresh significance to the old and honourable epithet of Tory—Benjamin Disraeli. If the Party courageously reverts to first principles, as expounded by him, its hold on the affections of its countrymen will be secure.

We do not imagine that any instructed Conservative makes the mistake of supposing that the principal business of a Conservative administration is to act as a corrective after Radical misrule,—still less merely to mark time between periods of Radical turbulence. Such a mistake is prevalent, especially in industrial districts, for the welfare of which interested parties display so unctuous a solicitude, and sometimes so travesty facts as to represent Conservative policy as merely negative. On the contrary, foreigners have observed that English public opinion favours change from the Conservative Party. Witness Catholic Emancipation (1829); Repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), Household Suffrage (1867), and Free Education



in Elementary Schools (1891). It would, of course, be idle to deny that Toryism has a preservative aspect—valuable elements in the national life find their justification in the national needs—but such a static philosophy exhibits no paradox when it makes large concessions to the spirit of change, always provided that what is proposed is in the public interest and is not inconsistent with the Constitution. The long and honourable record of Tory social legislation, the enfranchisement of the workmen (1867), the Proclamation to India (1858), the Federation of Canada (1867), and of Australia (1901), are witnesses of change without revolution. Admitting this, it is surely unnecessary to add that there are institutions which, although time may demand regulation and adaptation, Conservatives are pledged to defend to the uttermost. If they forsake these, they abandon all claim to be national. The foremost is the Crown, as to which Wordsworth adequately expresses the feeling of every true Tory:—

Hail to the crown by freedom shaped—to gird  
An English sovereign's brow! and to the throne  
Whereon he sits. Whose deep foundations lie  
In veneration and the people's love;  
Whose steps are equity, whose seal is law.

Another institution is the Church, which Conservatives, from love and gratitude, must uphold against hostile influences. Its ministrations of strength, guidance, and consolation embrace all classes; it is needed in the interests of national unity, continuity, and development. "The Church of England," said Disraeli, "is not a mere depository of doctrine. The Church of England is a part of England—it is a part of our strength and a part of our liberties, a part of our national character." "If," said Coleridge, "the religion of the majority of the people be innocuous to the interests of the nation, the majority have a natural right to be the trustees of the nationality—that property which is set apart for the nation's use, and rescued from . . . private hands. But when I say, *for the Nation's use*, I mean the very reverse of what the Radicals mean. They would convert it to relieve taxation, which I call a private, personal, perishable use. A nation's uses are immortal."

Conservatism is also interested in maintaining a leisured class, because noblesse oblige, and the tradition of public service associated with it is in refreshing contrast to the carpet-bagger, the professional agitator, who acknowledges no gratitude to antiquity, nor duty to posterity. Said F. W. Robertson, of Brighton: "There are chiefly, I believe, three influences counteractive of that great danger, accumulated wealth. The first is religion, the second is hereditary rank, and the third is the influence of men of contemplative lives. . . . I will say that rank is a power in itself more spiritual, because less tangible, than the power of wealth. The man who commands others by the extent of his broad acres, or by the number of his bales of cotton, rules them by a power more degrading and more earthly than he who rules them simply by the prestige of long hereditary claims. . . . Therefore it is that, with feelings strong on the side of human progress, and with but little reverence for mushroom rank, I am yet free to acknowledge that I feel sometimes a pang, when I hear or read of the extinction of great names, grey with the hoar of innumerable ages—sorrow, when I read in paper after paper of the passing of great ancestral estates under the hammer of the auctioneer; and for this reason, that in every such case I feel that there is one more sword gone that would have helped us in the battle which we must all fight against the superstitious idolatry of wealth."

The Empire cannot be claimed as the monopoly of any party. It has been a school of patriotism, the oldest virtue; within wide borders the most unselfish work of civilisation ever undertaken by a great power has been carried on; it has inculcated the sense of stewardship,—responsibility as well as privilege; order and liberty have been inscribed on its banners; and Conservatives have good reason for believing that its inexhaustible resources, depending on its power and

ascendancy, will be called into play in the era of consolidation and reconstruction that must follow the present struggle.

We believe that in the difficult future the Conservative Party will have an unparalleled opportunity. Its principles are implanted deeply in the national character,—duty, not place; conviction, not "push"; intense love of country, pride in its strength, glory in its steadfastness; hatred of shams; aversion from bureaucrats; a willingness to encourage ability, wherever found; a fierce determination to have done with that filthy campaign of class hatred, that poison of distrust, to which so many of our troubles are due. The best minds among us believe in levelling up, in the open aristocracy of excellence. May that largeness of aim and elevation of spirit, that Disraelian outlook, bring their due reward!

#### SUGAR AND THE GOVERNMENT.

LORD BEACONSFIELD, in his "Life of Lord George Bentinck," observed that "Sugar was an article of colonial produce which had been embarrassing, if not fatal, to many Governments. Strange that a manufacture which charms infancy and soothes old age should so frequently occasion political disaster!" At the outbreak of war in 1914 sugar was certainly embarrassing to the Government: that it did not prove fatal (as it might have done, had there been a famine) is due to the action of the Government.

When so many of the actions of the Government with regard to the control of various trades have received criticisms, more or less just, it is only fair that the attention of the public should be drawn to one of them—the Sugar Control—which has given us a regular, though small, supply of sugar, at what, taking everything into consideration, may be considered reasonable prices.

To understand the position properly, it must be remembered that, prior to the war, we were dependent upon the importations from Germany and Austria for by far the largest proportion of our supply, either in the form of raw beet sugar for our refineries, or for the cheaper kind of white sugar, which went into direct consumption, or supplied the large wants of the confectionery and jam manufacturers. A small portion of our supplies also came from Cuba, Java, Mauritius, and the West Indies.

With regard to the Continental sugar, it was bought principally on free-on-board terms, and arrived in port within a few days; whilst the raw cane sugar—coming from the more distant parts of the world—was bought on c.i.f. terms, that is, the brokers, or middlemen, paid the cost, freight, and insurance. On arrival at the Port of London, the documents were taken up by the refiners, manufacturers, or traders. On the outbreak of war, the Continental supply was immediately cut off, and at the same time offers of cane sugar were only made on f.o.b. terms, which meant that money had to be remitted to the distant ports, and the sugar paid for when it was put on board. It will thus be seen what this change meant to the importers in regard to the capital required to finance their businesses.

The immediate result of the Declaration of War was wild speculation for a few days, and a rise of some shillings per cwt. took place. It is due to Mr. McKenna to say that his promptitude in taking the question in hand at once checked this upward movement, and by buying very large quantities of sugar, which otherwise would have gone into the hands of speculators both here and in America, he secured a supply sufficient to make this country independent of further purchases for many months. Having, therefore, obtained the sugar, it was necessary to fix the retail price at which it should be sold to the consumer, and, consequently, it was also necessary to arrange the price the refiners and manufacturers would pay for the raw material, as well as that which they would obtain from the retailer. A margin of profit to the refiners was finally fixed, after consultation with those

interested, so as to leave a profit equal to that made in pre-war times, whilst any surplus was taken by the Government. Later on, the Royal Commission on the Sugar Supply was formed, and has worked, on the whole, to the satisfaction of the trade and consumer. Naturally, there have been criticisms, more especially from those who are always anxious to attack any Government control, and also from those who have been prevented from profiteering, but, generally speaking, these attacks have been due to ignorance of the extremely difficult problems with which the Commission has had to deal.

It is not too much to say that the control of the sugar trade has saved a vast sum to the public; whilst, at the same time, in spite of occasional heavy losses through the sinking of cargoes, the Commission has undoubtedly made large profits for the Government.

There is one feature, however, which is not so satisfactory, and that is the extension of control to the management of the internal workings of the businesses concerned, which, apparently, has been done by instructions of some department of the Government. The Commission has, as we have said, done good work in the supply and demand of the article itself, but it should leave the management of the various works to arrange wages and hours of their workmen as may be necessary for the proper conduct of their business. Mr. McKenna, in 1914, assured the refiners that though it was necessary to take over the buying of sugar, and the control of prices, it was not intended to interfere with the internal management of the refineries, and it is to be regretted that the Commission should have been forced to go beyond Mr. McKenna's original intention. Such interference means delay in settling questions of claims for higher wages and shorter hours, the delay causes dissatisfaction among the men, and the final settlement becomes more difficult.

It is in the interest of all that relations between the works-managers and the men should be friendly, and it may be left to the former not to give way unnecessarily, as they must always have before them the period after the war, when wages and hours of labour will have a large bearing on their power to compete with the import of foreign refined sugar, which will undoubtedly follow the conclusion of peace, unless some form of protection is adopted.

The following figures are interesting:—

#### IMPORTS IN TONS.

	Raw Cane	Raw Beet	Cane	Beet	Imports
1913.—	395,672	645,970	670	905,952	1,948,264
1916.—	1,118,758	—	423,500	9,587	1,551,845

In 1917 the total imports were probably 1,200,000 tons.

It will be seen from these figures that in 1913 we imported about 1,550,000 tons of beet (raw and refined) sugar, which was cut off by the War, except a few tons of refined beet. On the other hand, we imported last year nearly three times as much raw cane as in 1913. What are we going to do about sugar after the War? One thing goes without saying: we shall keep out German beet. But what about beet from our Allies—the French and the Belgians—and neutrals? Two policies seem open to us: One, to increase the production of cane sugar in our West Indian Colonies and Queensland by subsidies and a tariff; the other, to grow our own beet sugar in England. The idea that cane sugar is superior to beet sugar is a vulgar error. Sugar is a syrup boiled and then refined. Whether the syrup is extracted from a cane or a beet makes no difference. Most "crystal cubes" are made from the juice of the beet: the price paid for "Demerara" is a fancy—the power of a name. The cost and time of sea transport handicap cane in competition with beet. There is no reason why beet sugar should not be grown in England and refined on the spot. The sugar beet requires no special climate or soil. But to produce beet sugar in England on a large scale (and it is not worth doing on a small scale), three things are necessary. 1. A tariff against foreign beet. 2. The purchase of large areas of land. 3. The supply of adequate capital.

#### BOMBED!

"CAN you bear to talk about it?"  
"Of nothing else."

"Haunted?" I asked further.

"Obsessed," she replied; this little white-faced woman with an indomitable spirit in her large dark eyes, a spirit which had preserved her life and reason through an experience which might well have daunted the bravest heart. She had been buried for ten hours beneath the ruins of a bomb-struck house.

She and I were sitting now in a high-domed conservatory where great palms interlaced above us, a table-land of cineraria bloomed at our elbows, thick rugs were beneath our feet and outside the leaded windows we watched the rain falling with a full and soft determination to obliterate to death alike the faded blue of the forget-me-nots and the gaudy triumph of the tulips.

"What do you remember?" I questioned.

"Everything, and all the time," was the surprising reply; and then, rapidly in an even tone, as of one beneath the spell of a mesmerist, she continued:

"The parlour-maid had just said: 'it is five-and-twenty to twelve, and it is a long way off,' when I saw the chimney glass bend towards me and the surrounding furniture fall forward, inward as a house of cards built by wavering childish hands. I was still sitting in my chair, but my neck was bowed beneath some tremendous burden, and on my knees was a broken china hand-basin."

I interrupted: "was the noise terrific?"

"I heard none whatever, except the screams of a fellow victim whose hand I managed to reach and hold, whilst I urged her to quiet, so that together we might call for help and indicate our positions, to those of the cautious footsteps which with miraculous speed had gathered above in the awful, dustful dark."

"I am in the dining-room," I confidently asserted before I had realized by the proximity of the dresser that I was in the kitchen, and in an earth-bound cave centred by my chair with my dear one stretched on the crumbling ground at my side."

"All the instructions of my First Aid classes, and the regulations on the local bill posters crowded upon my memory, as I loosened my hair to fold over a wound and keep it free from contaminating influence, as I called out into the thick impenetrable gloom: 'telephone for the police,' and as I persuaded myself to a complete immobility. The overwhelming weight across my back appeared to be solid, and I guessed it harmless, unless any movement should dislodge it to disaster."

"A beam of light reached an adjacent crack, and someone called through: 'keep steady,' just as a mass of earth descended slowly and I was choked above the chin to a silence, broken long after by the scraping of fingers near me fumbling with an infinite patience to my mouth, and inserting a tube with a whisper, 'Inhale at once.' Time went by slowly: 'All clear, we may have as much light as we want,' was only the prelude to a weary waiting, whilst I could hear knocks and wary walking, of bodies alive and dead welcomed, found and removed with expert, gentle skill, to ensure against further dislodgement. I felt a little exhilaration from the oxygen and a little from the faint voice through the awful black, echoed round the fissures in the debris, 'You're all right.'"

"And still I sat interminable hour after hour doubled up in that chair, wedged across the shoulders, the broken basin rocking on my lap until, 'Two stretchers, we shall soon have them now,' I heard as in a dream, to herald the lift into the blessed air amid scores of pitiful faces, up to the ambulance, whence, encircled by the arms of two Specials, I was set down in the ward of the hospital."

"And how did you feel when you got there?" I ventured, to receive the amazing answer:

"Enraged at the questions about my age and religion, and resentful at the presentation of a striped flannelette Sports coat to do duty as a nightgown."

"And the Sisters?"



"They were angels of sympathy, but not about the Sports coat, though."

"And did you sleep then?"

"Oh, no! I recognized the parlourmaid in a near bed, uninjured except for a bruised hand, and what do you think she said to me?" and the great dark eyes twinkled with mirth, while she told me of the hand-maiden's plaint.

"Poor Cook is dead, Ma'am, and she had all our food cards."

#### PLATINUM IN EL DORADO.

EL DORADO, although long renowned as the irresistible Lure of the Greatly Adventurous, may, perhaps, in this twentieth century, call for an explanation. The words mean "The gilded," or, according to the Spanish legend of *El Indio Dorado*, "The Gilded Indian," which came to mean "The Land of the Gilded Indian," and so, by transition, "The Land of Gold." The legend had its origin in what, at the time of the Conquest, 1536, was known as Bacatá, the centre of the Chibcha Empire. The Conquistadores, having founded a new city, named it Bogotá, which is the seat of government of the present Republic of Colombia. Their latest conquest they named Nuevo Reino de Granada—"The New Kingdom of Granada"—commonly written Nuevo Granada. Bolivar, who freed it from the yoke of Spain, named it "The Republic of Colombia."

Followeth the legend of *El Dorado*. Before a new Monarch, always the nephew, not the son, of the preceding ruler, could ascend the throne of the Chibchas, he was compelled to pass six years in a cave, whither the rays of the sun could not penetrate. There he lived an anchorite, no woman being permitted to approach his gloomy abode. Exercise he took at night, by the light of the moon and the stars. At the end of the six weary years he was conducted by his caciques to the Sacred Lake of Guatavita, near the City of Bogotá. There he was stripped, smeared with clay, and sprinkled with gold until his body gleamed with the metal, and so, as "El Indio Dorado,"—his designation in the Chibcha language being unknown to the Spanish chronicler—he was presented to his subjects.

Accompanied by four caciques, he then embarked on a boat laden with gold and emeralds—gifts for the Gods of the Chibchas—and was rowed out into the centre lake. There, his offerings of the precious contents of the boat were tossed overboard, and when the last golden ornament and gem had disappeared, El Indio Dorado, monarch of the Chibcha peoples, returned to the shore and gave himself up to riotous indulgences. Such is the legend, which has been thus interpreted: The Chibchas had two sacred lakes in Bacatá, the Lake of Guatavita and that of Tunja, no great distance apart; and when Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada and his gold-drunken Spaniards conquered their city, they fled to the Lakes with their emeralds from Muzo and their gold, and offered them to their gods in hope of aid, and possibly to preserve their treasures from the conquerors. Be this as it may, many thousands of dollars have been spent in the endeavour to drain Guatavita and recover the Chibchas' gifts. Companies have been formed for the purpose, but none can be said to have been successful. Archaeological rarities have been found, some gold, and a few emeralds, but not enough to pay expenses; nevertheless, it is recorded that where the common people made their offerings, standing humbly on the shore, while their King, El Indio Dorado, gleaming with the precious yellow metal, dazzled their eyes in the centre of the lake, gold worth many thousands of pounds has been discovered, which is some evidence that the legend is true. Certainly the Bogotanos believe that, hidden beneath its waters, the lake still contains immense riches.

The land of El Dorado has been sought in many districts in the north of South America. Raleigh journeyed up the Orinoco in quest of it. The Dutch sought it between the Orinoco and the Amazon. Spaniards, on

the Llanos dos Caquetá, on the Rio Putumayo of evil renown, and around the lakes of Maracaibo and Manoa. Gradually, the hope of finding it was abandoned, but that the legend of the Land of Gold had its origin in the centre of what is known as the Republic of Colombia there can be no question, and a Land of Gold Colombia remains. Westward from Bogotá, over the "muddy Magdalena" and the western Cordillera, beyond Tolima and the rich El Valle, lies the country of the Chocó Indians, now the Intendencia of the Chocó in the Colombian Republic, known to the Spaniards as highly auriferous so long ago as 1513. North and east and south of the Chocó the Chibchas held sway, and it is reasonable to assume that from the Chocó a proportion of their gold was obtained, and that, consequently, the Intendencia has, historically, as good a claim to be the true El Dorado as any other Department of the Republic, and in the light of recent knowledge, possibly the best of all.

There, in the Chocó, in 1737, the first discovery of platinum as a valuable metal was made. In Brazil, for a century or more, the washers of gravels for diamonds, tossed aside as worthless the carbons they discovered—the blackish stones which now command a very remunerative price for tipping the "diamond" drills used in boring for platinum, for gold, for silver, copper, petroleum—veritable black diamonds, harder than the crystallized pebbles which are cut into brilliants, and almost as costly. So, in the Chocó, the natives were in the habit of throwing away the platinum they could not avoid gleaning up with the gold in their primitive *bateas*, no doubt, cursing the white grains and flakes—often three-fourths of the whole—on account of the trouble and labour the separation involved, for being of much the same specific gravity, the particles and small nuggets of gold and of platinum would persist in gathering in the same streak of "colours" in the bottom of the pan, only to be parted by manipulation. And to-day, the diamond miners of Brazil are re-washing old gravel-heaps for the carbons their fathers dropped as valueless when found, while the native platinum miners of the Chocó are pulling down river-side villages so as to enable them to dig up, disintegrate, and wash the clay floors beneath the huts where their ancestors flung away that now very precious metal after laboriously picking out every yellow grain; the respective inducements being that a good carbon to-day is of greater value, carat for carat, than an inferior diamond, whilst the value of platinum, fixed by Governments, is about five times that of gold, i.e., from £20 to £22 per Troy ounce. One of its associate metals, iridium, obtained in small quantities in refining platinum, is reported to have recently realized £38 per Troy ounce.

First discovered—by Europeans—in the Chocó in 1737, as stated, and secondly in 1821, in the foothills of the Urals in Russia, platinum is now a metal greatly sought after. That the natives of Colombia were familiar with it long before 1737, is, however, certain, for in the Chocó, at least, gold is seldom or never found without it, generally in the proportions of 75 per cent. platinum to 25 per cent. gold, and the utilization of the latter metal by the Chocós dates back to very early times. They made it into fish-hooks, which are frequently discovered, and threw away the white metal because they were unable to smelt it owing to the refractory qualities for which it is now in such great demand. That the metal was valuable the Spaniards would appear to have soon discovered, but little was sent to Madrid, and four shillings per pound came to be the price offered. A pound of refined platinum is to-day worth £240 sterling.

The present high price is a measure of the scarcity of platinum and its indispensability, particularly for war uses. A white metal with a brilliant lustre, it is obtained in the form of grains, or flakes, and nuggets, by washing alluvials, by dredging, hydraulic work or sluicing. Native miners in Colombia use the *batea*, a shallow pan, getting rid of the gravel, earth and water by a circular motion which leaves the platinum and gold on the bottom. Unrefined, it contains other valuable "associate" metals, the most valuable being iridium,

Alloyed with this, platinum becomes the hardest and toughest of metals. It does not oxidize or tarnish, possesses a very high melting point, viz: 1775°C. in the oxy-hydrogen jet, and is a bad conductor of electricity and heat. Its specific gravity being 21.5, it is one of the heaviest of known substances. It is so ductile that wire no thicker than a spider's web has been drawn from it.

Chief, perhaps, amongst its war uses is its employment in magnetos, the contact points of the ignition systems of engines for aeroplanes, hydroplanes, armoured cars, motor boats, tanks, &c. It is also used in the electric instruments which control the fire of artillery. Before the war, about half the world's supply of the metal was absorbed by jewellers and dental manufacturers, but when in January, 1916, the British Government declared a monopoly, and called for returns from jewellers, metallurgists, dental manufacturers, &c. of the stocks in hand, whether manufactured or not, its use for those purposes came to an end.

Very little platinum is obtainable in the British Empire. A few hundred ounces a year are received from New South Wales and Tasmania, and a few scores of ounces from Canada. The U.S.A. in 1916 yielded only 750 ounces, plus a few thousand ounces procured in refining copper matter. Russia, which a few years ago yielded 90 to 95 per cent. of the world's production, cannot any longer be depended upon. Berlin may secure the whole of the future Russian output.

It would appear, therefore, that it is now necessary to secure a sufficient supply of metal for the British Empire from fresh sources.

#### THE NERO OF BOITO.

ARRIGO BOITO, who died suddenly at Milan on June 10th, at the age of 76, was one of the most severely self-critical musicians that ever lived. He was also a poet and a truly great librettist; but in those branches, or his combination of them, he could better measure his strength, and so his literary product—whereby, *inter alia*, Verdi gave 'Otello' and 'Falstaff' to the world—left in him no sense of dissatisfaction. The vital question is, Where did he actually stand as a composer? It may be too soon to say. The man who wrote 'Mefistofele' clearly achieved something out of the ordinary, for that opera was produced half a century ago (not long after Gounod's 'Faust'), and ten years later was triumphantly challenging the French masterpiece on its own ground, besides holding the current stage ever since. Yet, despite its originality, its freshness of idea, its cleverness of technical treatment, its skilful mixture of the bizarre and the beautiful, long after it had won the admiration of two continents, Boito himself would never admit that he could not have done better by Goethe's glorious conception. He said as much to the present writer when he was in England to take his doctor's degree, *honoris causa*, at Cambridge in 1893. The 'Prologue in Heaven' was then performed as his "exercise"; and he allowed that it was the best thing in the whole score. But he added that he felt he was capable of writing a far finer work—"one that would deal with an Italian, not a German subject." He had already, indeed, begun the sketch of his poem, 'Nerone,' and eight years afterwards, when it was published by Fratelli Treves, he took care that an early copy should be sent to his friend in London. But the music never followed. It was duly composed; people in Milan claimed to have heard it in 1912; and the oft-promised opera was said to be near performance. Boito, however, still hesitated. The moment passed, and it was too late. Now he is dead, and we hear two stories—one (according to the *Corriere della Sera*) that the posthumous production of 'Nerone' after the war will be "something to look forward to"; the other, that just before his death Boito burned the scores of 'Nerone' and of "another opera which he had not completed."

Of these tales we believe the former. There is no evidence that we know of to prove that Boito ever

began a successor to 'Nerone.' The interest of the operatic world will some day be concentrated upon the semi-mystical, semi-historical tragedy, whereof for the time being the strange and daring poem is all that lies before us. It is in five acts, but that is its sole concession to conventional usage. Mysticism plays the larger part in the unfolding of its plan. No youthful Roman Emperor of the gaudy stage type is the Nero of these scenes. His life of misdeeds already hangs heavily upon him, and at the very outset he is a fugitive from his own conscience, striving to appease the wrath of the Furies by decently burying the ashes of the mother whom he has murdered, in an obscure *campo santo* on the Appian Way. Preceding him hither come the two secondary figures of the story—one the infamous soldier Tigellinus, the traitor who pandered to every vile desire that the brain of Nero conjured up. And the other, who digs the grave for Agrippina's urn, who is he? No familiar personage of the Imperial household this; no Roman either; although he was known to have been in Rome at the time of Claudius. He is the stranger within the gates who is here destined to be Nero's last and greatest evil genius; being no other than Simon Magus, whom Peter withstood and confuted (Acts viii.), in whom early ecclesiastical tradition saw the caricature of Christ, the "devil-inspired founder of a religion" and "the father of all heresy." This Simon works only for his own aggrandizement and Nero's ruin. Under his influence Asteria, half-Medusa, half-woman—somewhat after the fashion of Kundry under Klingsor—strives to win Nero's soul and body, and in the end succeeds. Asteria is a very remarkable creation, and one cannot help thinking that she was suggested by the Helena who, according to Justin, accompanied Simon Magus to Rome, and whom he there gave out to be the mother of the angels and powers who created this world. But the treatment of the character is entirely original.

The important *dramatis personæ* are few in number, but they are not all bad. The necessary contrast is afforded by Fanuel, an Oriental mariner, and Rubia, the woman who loves him, leaders of the Christian believers whom Nero is throwing to the lions in the arena. Fanuel's growing power is envied and feared by Simon, who offers to make him Prophet-King of a glorious temple that he will build upon the seven hills. He draws an inspiring picture of it in glowing language. But Fanuel knows Simon the Samaritan, "Messia di Satana," for what he is, and rejects the proffered bribe. "Io t'estirpo da Israel," he shouts back at him; and thenceforward it is war to the death between the two. As day breaks over the cemetery Nero prepares for flight, only to find himself the object of the adulation instead of the execration of the dreaded Roman populace. He hides and hears them singing his verses; then, astonished at his easy escape from the crime of matricide, he issues forth and leads them back in triumph to the city. Beside his gilded litter strides Tigellinus, now commander of the Pretorian Guard.

The second act takes place in a great subterranean temple, where Simon Magus presides over the mysteries, and incidentally rakes in the gold and silver lavished by the credulous worshippers upon a gigantic bronze idol. It is a double scene, and the idol stands in the crypt, where the crowd kneels in adoration; while hidden in the "sacarium" are the priests, headed by Simon and Gobrias, busy "working the oracle" for the benefit of their dupes. They take little pains to conceal their contempt for the latter, and Gobrias actually drinks glass after glass of sacramental wine until he becomes tipsy. Nero, whose statue in gold also ornaments the crypt, comes in person at the bidding of Simon, who prepares Asteria for the part she is to play to subjugate the tyrant. The religious pretence fails to cheat him, because the woman's kiss betrays her mortal origin. He quickly sees through the whole fraud, orders the destruction of the temple and sends Asteria to prison; but temporarily liberates Simon, and engages the bibulous Gobrias as a comedian for his theatre. The whole scene is conceived and worked out with wonderful skill.



In the third act Asteria is again free. She disturbs the peaceful Christians at their prayers, and Simon comes in disguise to their meeting-place, making another vain attempt to win over Fanuel. But, although it gives opportunity for fine choral effects, the interest of the tragedy is inferior here to that of the fourth act, which takes place partly in the Oppidum, partly in the Spoliarium of the Amphitheatre. The incidents of the arena are not enacted in view of the audience; they are *heard*; they are described more or less through the shouts and comments of the spectators, amidst the constant *va-et-vient* of hundreds of "supers." One after another the Christian martyrs pass to and from the arena, among them Rubria, the beloved of Fanuel. Later comes the turn of Simon Magus, whom Nero condemns to perform the flight of Icarus from the topmost tower of the Oppidum; but he prefers to stab himself with a dagger which he snatches from Tigellinus. Then, when the clamour is at its height, smoke begins to invade the interior of the vast building and quickly spreads, until it bursts into fire and flame. Rome is burning!

There is a second scene to this act—the search for the bodies amid the darkness of the Spoliarium; but at first glance it does not seem to be either very striking or essential to the plot. The final act, however, is laid out with masterful ability. It chiefly embodies a performance upon the stage of Nero's theatre, with the terrible conflagration still in progress. In his own play the Emperor himself impersonates Orestes, defying the Eumenides and refusing to repent the murder of his mother—"Atroce madre!" But when the shade of Agrippina really appears before him the coward sings another tune, and the last scene of all shows him endeavouring to find solace in the arms of Asteria, until, like Macbeth, he is visited by the spectres of all his victims in turn. Then she stabs herself, and Nero falls insensible as the curtain descends.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES SCANDAL.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—I have read with considerable interest the correspondence which has recently been appearing in your pages in connection with what you truly describe in your issue of May 18th, as the "Co-operative Scandal." The Co-operative agency is, I presume, a movement created for the purpose of the educational and propagandist work of the Co-operative movement which Mr. H. L. Fisher so warmly commended in the recent Liverpool Congress, but which I believe, if carefully examined, will be found to be simply a department for advertising Co-operative Stores. I understand that the educational funds are utilised for those Whitsuntide children's treats which are very popular, and similar methods of advertising the supposed benefits which consumers will derive by becoming a member of these stores. It is quite true when Messrs. R. Owen, G. L. Holyoake, E. V. Neale, and others, the pioneers of the movement, laboured for its establishment, they had very high ideals, and to quote Alderman Johnston, J.P., "travelled and paid their own travelling expenses in support of the propagation of those ideals." The times have changed and the educational movement ought now to be described as an advertising department. Along with the change in their "educational affairs" has come a serious change in their commercial methods as indicated by your correspondent "Mincing Lane Broker," but the incidents to which he refers as happening in 1915 appear to be continued in the latest move of 1918. This time it is in connection with the Ministry of Food, a department which has set up a "Consumer's Council," the members of which, I believe, are mainly enthusiastic supporters of co-operation, whilst inside the Ministry are such gentlemen as Mr. T. W. Allen, who represented that Ministry at the Liverpool Congress. He was the bearer of a letter from Mr. Clynes who, after apologising for his

absence, said: "what we have been able to do on the subject of tea will go far to remove the admitted grievances of co-operation with regard to that article." Mr. Clynes refers to action which at this moment is the scandal of the tea trade. The Ministry of Food set up a system, known as the Tea Control Committee, and at this Committee there is a ballot for all the available tea so that it shall be equally divided amongst the various wholesale distributors; all branches of the trade are represented on that Committee. To the amazement of them all, on Friday, May 3rd, an instruction came from the Ministry of Food that the Co-operative Wholesale Society was to receive 50 per cent. increase in its supplies of tea beyond any other wholesale distributor. I understand the suggestion was that this extra allowance was to enable the Co-operative Wholesale Society to supply all the Co-operators with at least 1½ ozs. of tea per head; that might have been the view of the Ministry of Food, but I am informed that the available figures show that this will give the Co-operative Wholesale Society practically an amount of tea to distribute which will give co-operators who buy their tea from the stores sufficient for three or four times as much as any other members of the public can obtain. If the story of 1915 can be regarded as a scandal, the story of 1918 is a very much greater scandal. Your readers will realise that this last move, in which the co-operators have received support from the Ministry of Food to what is I think an unwarrantable extent, takes away no fewer than 300,000 lbs. of tea per week from the consuming public, who could get it through the ordinary retail distributor who would pay Income Tax upon the transaction, places it in the hands of a privileged monopoly which the co-operative movement is seeking to set up, and takes it out of the Income Tax paying area altogether. Perhaps the inspired Co-operative press agency may seek to put a different face upon this scandal, but the fact will remain that they have been getting the extra tea from the beginning of May until the present moment, and that some of the Co-operative Stores are advertising to the public a guarantee of 2 ozs. of tea per week per head, when the grocers and other retail tea distributors of the country cannot get half that amount for their customers. You are, Sir, doing the nation a service by calling attention to the necessity for Parliament to look immediately into the conditions under which this trade monopoly has grown up and to devise methods by which it can be put on the same basis and only receive the same privileges as other sections of the trading community.

Yours faithfully,

E. R. THOMPSON,

Chairman, W. BROOKS & CO., LTD.,  
Family Grocers.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—It is really rather important for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the nation to know whether the Co-operative Wholesale Society does or does not make profits. According to one of their branches, the St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, the C.W.S. buys goods and resells them to its members at prices which merely repay original cost, plus administration expenses. Is this true or false? And what do "the expenses of carrying on the society" amount to? It is possible (and not improbable) that the officials of the C.W.S. may be revealing in salaries greater than those of Cabinet Ministers. What is a profit? is a question quite as important as Sir Robert Peel's famous query: what is a pound? But it is one which only can be settled by the despot of these days, the real ruler of our times, viz: the Chartered Accountant. The Government ought to appoint some firm of Chartered Accountants to make a report upon the balance sheet of the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

Yours faithfully,

J. C.

## GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INDUSTRY.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Anyone acquainted with the exasperating and ruinous delays caused by foolish correspondence with Government officials, who are set to "control" businesses of which they know nothing, must wonder that this country does not go under in the great struggle. In no industry is this control more dilatory and disastrous than in the coal trade, as the following facts, communicated to me by a colliery manager, show.

The colliery applied for "priority" for so many yards of steel tubes, which it was explained were necessary for extending their existing compressed air mains below ground in four seams; otherwise the pits would be stopped working. The department replied by asking for a plan of dozens of miles of pipe mains, at a time when the staff of draughtsmen and surveyors had been reduced to skeleton form; and by the suggestion that cast-iron pipes might be substituted for iron steel tubes!

On the 25th March the colliery applied to the Munitions Department for priority certificates for some endless rope haulage gears, to enable them to dispense with ponies underground, which are difficult to feed, and so maintain, if not increase, their output. On the 28th an official letter wanting to know "the weights" and why the ropes are wanted urgently, both of which had been stated in the application of the 25th. On the 30th another letter from the colliery saying that the ropes are most urgently required. On the 3rd April letter from the department saying that the application has not been made in the proper form, and enclosing the proper form. On the 5th April letter from the colliery filling up the required form. On the 8th April letter from the department acknowledging receipt of the application, but requesting the colliery to apply for a three months' supply of ropes. This is complied with, and on the 10th April it is discovered by the Munitions Department that the application ought not to have been made to them, but to the Coal Controller, in the Holborn Viaduct Hotel. *Da Capo!* The correspondence begins again, with a fresh pen, and a new demand for the cost of each gear, and a rough sketch plan showing the position of the gears and the dip of the roadways! And so on, and so forth, the last letter shewn me being dated 15th April, still wrangling over absurd points, and asking foolish questions, three weeks after the original urgent application!

This is a typical case; there must be thousands of others like it in the controlled industries. It makes business men mad, and gravely jeopardises the chances of ending the war.

Naturally I do not care to publish my name or that of the colliery in question, but enclose my card and remain,

Yours faithfully,  
A BUSINESS MAN.

## NATIONAL WAR BONDS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Surely the injured tone in "G. C. W.'s" letter of the 15th, regarding his "being expected to make a return of his dividends" on his War Bonds is quite uncalled for. He must realise that during a war of this magnitude every sovereign invested in our Country's War Loans is adding to her resources at the present critical period through which we are passing.

The Exchequer calls in a patriotic spirit not only for the reinvestment of interest on our holdings of the 5 per cent. War Bonds, but of the interest and dividends on our other investments whether they be Rubber Shares or Cornish Mining Shares.

Surely he can use his own judgment as to whether his income (reduced doubtless by present prices) is or is not sufficient to allow him to turn in his interest on War Bonds—but because he is not able to do it there seems

no reason to pose as the injured martyr when there are other people who can afford to, and doubtless will follow the suggestion of the Government.

I am, &c.,  
R. J. H.

The White Cottage,  
Woodbridge, Suffolk.

## MEXICAN AFFAIRS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Many British subjects will agree with your comments, a week or two ago, upon certain Mexican propaganda now being circulated in this country. Last week a Mr. F. R. Villavicencio, whoever he may be, writes to express great surprise at your note, and to say that the Mexican Government are at present making a study of the foreign debts, and before long they will announce the "way in which they will carry out this business," and that he is "authorised," etc., etc. There is only one way of "carrying out the business" of paying one's debts, and that is by paying them. It is a process that requires no "study"—except that there may be some difficulty in finding a Mexican word for "honesty." Your correspondent may be reminded of the Mexican Four per cent. Loan of 1904, and of the obligations of the Mexican Government in respect of the bonds of the National Railways of Mexico; they have been in default for years. No "study" is necessary; the interest is 4 per cent. per annum, as printed on the bonds signed by representatives of the Mexican Government. We are aware of intervening revolutions and the resulting barbarities, all evidences of the advance of Mexico in civilization, perhaps. If Mr. F. R. Villavicencio is directly or indirectly connected with the Mexican Government or a bureau supplying Mexican news, we can appraise his letter to you at its proper value. In any case, the political record of Mexico during the past few years inclines peace-loving American citizens and Britons towards a remedy that may be inconvenient to Mexican politicians and their friends. Small nationalities must be defended; but every nation, great or small, must behave itself, as Germany will ultimately find, and as President Wilson has declared. Mexico will do well to note that aspect of matters. Notwithstanding all Mr. Villavicencio is "authorized" to deny, there is a silent determination among a powerful section of the people of the United States not to tolerate much longer a political condition in Mexico which resembles that of Milan in the fifteenth century. Add to this that the United States are now deeply interested in the Panama Canal. Your correspondent will find, indeed, cause for "surprise," if Mexico does not put her house in order by the next Presidential election, or by the time a few million victorious United States troops return from France. Civilization on both sides of the Atlantic is not going to run risks of more bloodshed arising out of the troubles of small nations. We have had our Balkan lesson. Finally, Mexico in unrest is a focus for the German bacillus of mischief, and some think that it would add to the tranquillity of the world in many ways were Mexico incorporated with the United States.

Yours, etc.,  
GRINGO.

## DECIMAL OR OCTAVAL?

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Three entirely distinct questions get mixed up in this matter, namely, "which radix," "which standard," and "what names?" The last is scarcely worth discussion, as the right names for coins cannot be fixed by one person, but will evolve. We can decide the standard, whether our present sovereign, shilling, or penny, quite independently of the radix. For example, the octaval coinage I sketched takes the present sovereign and divides it into 256 slightly altered pennies. The structure of the coinage would



be unaltered if it is preferred to make the penny the standard (as Lord Leverhulme prefers) and take 256 of them to make a sovereign of new value.

Decimal advocates could also adopt the penny standard, and take 250 of them to make a new value sovereign without altering the structure, or even the names of their coinage. As regards the standard of value, is it possible, with the differences of standards of gold, etc., to have one international standard coin? I am not qualified to judge. I keep an open mind on all these points. The radix question is the primary and all-important one.

Every decimal proposal contains tacit admission of the urgent need of binary relations between the coins.

The Southwark Bill contains no less than four binary series, viz :

1,000 mils.	200 mils.	10 mils.	4 mils.
500 "	100 "	5 "	2 "
	50 "		1 "
	25 "		"

There are three awkward gaps between these which make the whole most imperfect for purposes of change. An octaval coinage presents a series so even and perfect that a shopkeeper possessing only one each of the issued coins, from £1 to one (reputed) farthing, could give correct change out of a £2 cheque for any sale from one farthing to £2, although all the coins in his possession amount to a farthing less than £2. The only argument for decimal coinage lies in computation. If octaval coinage were adopted computation would have all the ease and simplicity of the present "decimals" in the matter of fractions of a unit, and we should continue to count upwards in tens, counting downwards uniformly in eights, in place of in twelfths, twentieths, sixteenths, etc., as is our present practice with our coinage and weights.

In the example below, the addition is identical whether the figures represent sovereigns, half-crowns, and groats, or gallons, pints, and gills, or pounds, double-ounces, and quarter ounces. Having added up a column, divide by eight, put down the remainder and add the quotient in with the column to the left. But on the left of the octaval mark add up in the usual way for counting in tens.

2.51  
7.06  
5.13  
3.20

18.12

There would be this co-ordination: that half-crown per gallon or pound would be a groat per pint or double-ounce, and a cent. per gill or quarter-ounce. And so on with a reformed system of the future which, unlike divisions into tenths, would be familiar and usable for market purposes.

Yours truly,

ALFRED WATKINS.

Hereford, June 16th.

#### "DIVIDE BY EIGHT."

To the Editor of THE SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—“Eight is the number of Justice,” says Pythagoras: presumably because eight units of length may form a square, whose sides are equal, and every turn to the right. And in the ‘Times Trade Supplement,’ of June, 1917, Mr. F. A. Halsey, Commissioner of the American Institute of Weights and Measures, wrote:—“The Binary system is one of the few perfect things in this world.”

It looks as if we are likely to be rushed into decimal sub-division without the rival claims of octaval or dual sub-division receiving due consideration.

This being so, it is surely time to be founding an “Octaval Association” to do battle with the “Decimal Association” and the Tenists, who already have their knife at our throats, as foreseen and provided against by Herbert Spencer in the remarkable codicil to his last will and testament.

The monthly journal of the Octaval Association might appropriately be called “The Octopus,” its objects being to educate public opinion, Home, Foreign, and Colonial, as to the advantages of octaval over decimal sub-division of money and measure units, and to advocate the identification of such units all over the world.

Such a “World Money and Measure Union” would do as much for economic progress as the proposed “League of Nations” is likely to do for political progress.

Who joins “The Octaval Association,” founded MCMXVIII? (eight letters!).

EUSTICE G. EDWARDS,

Major, Royal Artillery (retired).

61, Clifton Park Road, Clifton, Bristol,

June 17th, 1918.

#### THE POLES IN LONDON.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—May I be allowed, not as a political associate, but rather as political opponent to the present policy of Mr. A. Zaleski, to send this emphatic protest against the suggestion occurring in the article on “The Practical Importance of Poland,” contained in your issue of 1st June, that Mr. Zaleski may be either directly or indirectly connected with a recent vulgar act of terrorism and violence which occurred in the Polish National Committee’s premises in London?

Mr. Zaleski has always represented the cause of Poland with an inspiring dignity and correctness, and no one who knows, by experience, the chivalry of his nature can possibly imagine that he would ever stoop to be implicated in such an incident as the above.

I am sending you this sincere and spontaneous expression of opinion because I am sure that the *Saturday Review* has no desire to be unjust to any one, and that you will be only too glad to withdraw a suggestion which must originally have been based on some kind of misapprehension.

Yours faithfully,

L. LITWINSKI.

#### THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Your correspondent in his letter under this heading in your impression of the 15th inst asks what would happen if “County Councillors . . . and others too numerous to mention (at present working gratuitously) threatened to go on strike . . . and refused to do any work whatever?”

May I suggest that in all probability, under these conditions, the work would be done entirely—as it is now mainly—by responsible officials. As one who is both an official and also one of those who might “threaten to go on strike,” I submit that this possible result would be regrettable. It might be not without interest to enquire how far the alleged lack of confidence in our “paid legislators” and the growth of officialism are subtly and unconsciously connected with “payment of members,” but space conditions prohibit discussion in this brief letter.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

E. K. FRANCIS.

Colchester, 17 June, 1918.

#### THE PROSECUTION IN THE BILLING CASE.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—I have just seen an article in your issue of 8th June, headed “The Billing Case” in which the writer states: “It was the fault of Mr. Hume Williams that this flood of scandalous and irrelevant matter was let in,” and proceeds to blame Mr. Hume Williams for referring in his opening speech to the article “The first 47,000” in the *Imperialist* of 26th January.

You may care to know that the facts (and the law) are as follows:

Mr. Hume Williams was obliged to refer in his opening to the Imperialist article because without it the last sentence of the libel as laid in the indictment was unintelligible and the defendant had justified the whole indictment.

The indictment was preferred some three weeks before Mr. Hume Williams was first consulted in the case, was settled by myself and I am alone responsible for its form. Why it included the whole paragraph appearing under the unquotable title is, I imagine, a matter of no interest except to lawyers, my client, and myself.

The writer of the article commences his criticism with the observation "Journalistic criticism of a trial like the Billing prosecution is nearly always unfair because based on ignorance."

That is my excuse for troubling you with this letter.

Yours truly,

TRAVERS HUMPHREYS.

[The article complained of was written by a lawyer who had the advantage of discussing the subject with three other lawyers of eminence.—ED. S. R.]

### REPRISALS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Can any of your correspondents tell us what we are gaining by our so-called reprisals?

It seems to have been assumed that it would prevent the Huns from bombing London and Paris. It has not done so, but it has given them the devilish satisfaction of causing us to do that which we have loudly declared to be cruel, brutal and contrary to the laws of civilized warfare; and as imitation is said to be the sincerest flattery, the Huns must be immensely gratified.

In a recent letter to *The Times*, Sir A. Conan Doyle wrote: "When Miss Cavell was shot we should at once have shot our three leading prisoners. When Captain Fryatt was murdered we should have executed two submarine captains."

This sounds to me more like the angry raving of a passionate child than the mature judgment of a sane man. The Huns would, of course, have promptly murdered double the number of our people in their hands, and so the game would have gone on gaily.

Have we forgotten what happened when Mr. Churchill applied special treatment to a captured submarine crew, and how he had to climb down ignominiously?

I submit that we shall never be able to compete successfully with the Germans in the game of cold-blooded murders, and that we ought not to soil our hands by trying.

Your obedient servant,  
C. C. PENROSE FITZGERALD,  
(Admiral retired).

### "I SUPPOSE I DON'T COUNT."

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Every true-hearted person who has seen it, will feel grateful to *Punch* for the cartoon in its issue of May 22nd, of a tired-looking horse with the word "Underfed," beneath it.

It is turning its head to read a notice which runs: "Food Control. Extra Rations for Heavy Workers:" and as it does so, "The Working Horse" soliloquises: "I suppose I don't count."

The cartoon and the way it is worded are the very genius of unobtrusive and long-suffering pathos: "Beyond all praise but a tear."

If only it were possible to raise that tear to the eyes of the owners of the overworked anatomies of horses so painfully in evidence upon our streets at the present time!

These valuable servants and noble friends of man, toiling so laboriously and faring so cruelly, plead eloquently for the better treatment they so justly deserve. But if owners cannot rise to a little fellow-feeling towards these patient "sharers in the common

fate," surely on the lower ground of shame they should be treated far better, for it is a burning shame to see their starved and jaded condition. Some look more like equine corpses galvanized into the semblance of life, so inane and mechanical are their movements and bearing.

"Absolutely useless as food for horses. An unlimited allowance of such material would be a starvation diet for a horse:" was the verdict of a veterinary surgeon on a mixture sold as a substitute for corn. This is quoted by *The Animals' Defender* of June, from a letter by Mr. John Galsworthy in the *Morning Post* of May 3rd.

Some of the societies which exist ostensibly for the purpose of promoting the welfare of horses, and have ample funds to do so, might reproduce such an appealing cartoon as that in *Punch*, as a small bill for extensive distribution, for it would move all but the morally petrified.

It tries the patience to hear *Punch* spoken of as if it were merely a paper of jokes and amusement, detached from all serious purpose; when obviously it is, and always must have been one of the most powerful moral educative agencies of civilization. Invariably on the side of the highest moral reason, it applies the scathing light of its refined satire impartially to the exposure of the social and political absurdities of the hour, and the eulogising of the wise and admirable.

Love of Approbation—one of the strongest of human instincts, Mr. George Combe the eminent psychophysicist felicitously described as "The Drill Sergeant of Society." It is, as he says, "the butt upon which Wit strikes, when, by means of ridicule it drives us from our follies." Of vanity, which is an abuse of this sentiment, the quaint American humorist, Josh Billings, wrote: "Vanity is a mean passion; but after all, it makes as many people tolerable as it does intolerable." And how true it is that multitudes do, from fear of Mrs. Grundy, what they are quite incapable of doing from higher motives.

Hence, many who are too cruel to feel pity or sympathy for the suffering horses, may be accessible through their sense of shame, and to this, satire appeals. In the Bible, every kind of motive is appealed to to raise men morally.

Pope, "The Wasp of Twickenham," like the later American epigrammist, Josh Billings, knew what a force vanity is in the regulation of human character and conduct when he wrote:

"Yes, I am proud, I may be proud to see,  
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:  
Who scorn the bar, the pulpit and the throne,  
Are touched and shamed by ridicule alone."

Is England to become a by-word among the nations for the basest forms of cruelty?

I am, Sir,  
Yours truly,  
MAURICE L. JOHNSON.

26, St. Paul's Road,  
Clifton, Bristol.

### WAR-TIME MANNERS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Being, I am afraid, rather absent-minded and awkward, I have more than once found myself running up against the khaki-clad figures which throng our streets. On every occasion of the kind the other party to the collision, whether officer or private, to my relief as well as surprise, politely apologised to me for getting in my way, although in point of fact the fault was entirely on my side. Trifles light as air are sometimes symptomatic; and a little thing of this sort seems to me to be almost enough of itself to show, if proof were needed, how baseless, so far as our own countrymen are concerned, is the fear of "militarism" which has been conjured up by certain over-anxious minds.

I am, sir, yours faithfully,  
AN ELDERLY CIVILIAN.



## REVIEWS.

## THE FRENCH SPIRIT.

Three French Moralists. By Edmund Gosse, C.B. Heinemann. 6s. net.

Mr. Gosse has chosen La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, and Vauvenargues, for the purpose of tracing to its sources in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the spirit of French literature. Sincerity and clearness of thought and expression are the essence of the French spirit in letters. French critics believe rightly that obscurity of expression is due to confusion of thought. "*Une phrase mal agencée*," says Renan, "*répond presque toujours à une pensée inexacte*." Writers like Carlyle, George Meredith, and Henry James would not have been tolerated in France: they would have been put down by the body of educated opinion. The creator of this tradition of intellectual honesty and courage is, according to Mr. Gosse, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, who, having mixed in all the follies and scandals of the Fronde, retired in the middle of the seventeenth century to the study of life, assisted by a few books and the conversation of intellectual men and women. "The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld," writes Mr. Gosse, "were atoms of gold sifted through the mesh of discussions at the dinner-table, around the fire in winter, under the hawthorns and lilacs which Mme. de Sévigné describes, in endless talk between two or more trained and intelligent persons, along the course of which thought oscillated from extreme to extreme, until at last the company dispersed, leaving La Rochefoucauld to capture and fix the result of all that desultory conversation." Intellectual talk, the sieve of philosophic thought, is only possible in a small society: it withers at the approach of a mob. Such a society flourished in France and England throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; it languished through the first three decades of the nineteenth century: it fled shuddering from the plutocracy and the democracy. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld, having seen and done everything, was in the enviable position of being able to say and write what he liked. He was an intellectual pioneer: it is needless to say he was not a founder of a school or system of ethics: his business was to clear the jungle of shams and hypocrisies, which had grown up under the rule of the Cardinals. But as men straighten a warped plank by bending it in the opposite direction, La Rochefoucauld exaggerated somewhat the power of *amour propre*, self-love, egoism, as a motive, just as Bentham did a century later. He chose the maxim, or epigram, or aphorism, as the vehicle of his lesson of honesty and clearness, as Bossuet chose the sermon, and Disraeli the novel. That "there is something in the misfortunes of our friends not displeasing to us," and that "gratitude in the majority of men is simply a strong and secret wish to receive still greater benefits," or, as it has been paraphrased, "a lively sense of favours to come," are the best known of La Rochefoucauld's maxims. The first is true, not from ill-nature, but because we congratulate ourselves on having escaped a similar fate, or console ourselves with companionship in distress. The second is not true, because most men dislike the sense of obligation so much that they are unwilling to increase it. Far truer and finer is Halifax's observation that "gratitude is one of those things that cannot be bought; a real sense of a kind thing is a gift of Nature, and never was or can be acquired." Let Pascal beat that.

La Bruyère, who followed La Rochefoucauld in the seventeenth century, was tutor in the household of the Great Condé, and could not, like the Duke, say and write what he liked. He was obliged to employ allegory, satire, irony, and the imaginary portrait, like Theophrastus, as the vehicle of his philosophy of life. Mr. Gosse is enthusiastic over the exquisite beauty and force of La Bruyère's style. We think it would have been better if Mr. Gosse had given us some specimens in the original language, as Matthew

Arnold did in dealing with the de Guérins. For some reason the "bouquet" of French style escapes in translation. Mr. Gosse believes that La Bruyère was, if not the literary progenitor, to some extent the model of Addison and Steele. We cannot agree with Mr. Gosse's comparison of the French Moralists with their English contemporary, Savile Lord Halifax, to the disadvantage of the latter. Halifax is cumbrous and awkward, Mr. Gosse thinks, when set side by side with the flexible, light glancing Frenchmen. This is true of Halifax's political pieces, the 'Character of a Trimmer,' and 'The Anatomy of an Equivalent': but current politics are a stiff subject, which La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère never touched. But we will back Halifax's Character of Charles II. against any of La Bruyère's "Caractères," or indeed against any portrait in history, ancient or modern. As for Maxims, Halifax's 'Political Thoughts and Reflections' and his 'Moral Thoughts and Reflections,' are, in our judgment, wiser and wittier than anything in La Rochefoucauld, or even in Pascal, whom we value more.

Vauvenargues, who wrote in the middle of the eighteenth century, was a very different person from the maxim-maker and the satirist who preceded him. The Duke was of the great aristocracy; La Bruyère was a bourgeois; the Marquis de Vauvenargues was of the provincial nobility, who, being poor, were *déconsidérés* in the extravagant times of the Regent. He was, of course, a soldier; he was badly wounded in the Austrian wars; his health was destroyed, and he died young, in a Parisian garret. His suffering and his poverty no doubt tinged his philosophy of life, which was serious and romantic. He was the friend of the violent and eccentric Mirabeau (the father of the revolutionary hero), and of Voltaire, who, though his senior, called him *père* and almost worshipped him. The mission of Vauvenargues was to revive the love of *la gloire*, and found it on something deeper and broader than military success. As Vauvenargues used the word it cannot be translated by "glory"; it means rather, love of country, of duty, of the good opinion of one's compatriots and of posterity. The 'Discours sur la Gloire' and 'Réflexions sur Divers Sujets' are not any more than the 'Maximes' and the 'Caractères,' an attempt to found a system. They are an effort to restore enthusiasm as a motive to conduct, and a protest against the heartless sensuality and aimless frivolity of the Regency and the early days of Louis XV. From the moral seriousness and chivalry of Vauvenargues Mr. Gosse passes to "The Gallantry of France," in his final chapter, which dwells on the thoughtful and concentrated patriotism of French officers at the beginning of this war. Mr. Gosse quotes from the writings of some of the young French intellectuals, who were killed in the first year, to show how different was their quiet, steely enthusiasm from "the blind hysterics of the Celt," and we gather that he intends to convey that this mentality was the product of such teaching as Vauvenargues delivered to his generation. This book from the pen of Mr. Gosse is, we need hardly add, of historical interest, as well as critical and ethical value. It should be read the more attentively at a time when it is important for us to understand, as we seldom take the trouble to do, the intellectual and moral forces behind the most splendid physical effort in the history of France.

## A VICTORIAN EVANGELICAL.

The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh. By L. E. O'Rourke. Longmans. 10s. 6d.

THIS book takes us into another world—a world separated from us by a great gulf, not of years, but of thought and feeling. It takes us into the heart of the Evangelical movement, of which Catherine Marsh was a pillar. Very few people remember the force of that movement, which was in full swing during the forties and fifties. It had about it something essentially Victorian. It did not seek, as did the eighteenth century dissenters, to upset the Church by revival, rather

it aimed at establishing the Church by it. And its methods, like its language, were wholly colloquial. For the Evangelicals, God was at once a loving Father, and a low-church clergyman. On the one hand, they had for Him a real and intimate sense of personal devotion, on the other, they fettered him with the limitations of a narrow Creed. And by attributing them to an omnipotent Being they exalted those limitations into eternal law.

They pressed the Kingdom of Heaven home to the streets and byways, and too often their conception of that Kingdom was, to put it frankly, a rather bourgeois affair. That does not detract from the good which they did. They brought high things down to the common level and in that way they popularized them. Thackeray might sneer at tracts like 'The Washerwoman of Finchley Common.' Nevertheless, the washerwomen—and many for whom they washed—liked and were helped by them. Our humour may perhaps not be unmoved when Miss Marsh stops in the street to pray that a bricklayer on a dangerous scaffolding may be brought to the ground again in safety. But the bricklayer was so stirred and touched by her interest that the incident had a lasting influence upon him for good.

Miss Marsh is, indeed, a typical Evangelical, and embodies the softer aspect of the movement. She is also a typical Victorian. Church and home are the centres of her life and of her work. She had no special training; she attached herself to no special organization. She had not the intellect of a Florence Nightingale nor the wide grasp of an Octavia Hill, but she had quick energies, a magnetic personality and a warm heart. And she was a born missionary. She would "compass Heaven and earth to gain one proselyte." This was her mainspring, and this the secret of her power with so many divergent conditions of men.

The daughter of a clergyman, and born into a circle of aristocratic Evangelicals, she entered at once into the field of her activities. Her time was divided between her many friends, her home, and the parishes which fell to the lot of an adored father. In all three spheres she was beloved; and in all three it was her fervent faith, combined with her gift for individual intimacy, which was her strength. That faith and that gift found expression in ways which it is perhaps difficult for a later generation to understand. Heart to heart talks, death-bed consolation, hand to hand wrestling for souls, revivalist meetings, belong to a phase which is passing. So does the literal conception of prayer which was the corner-stone of her creed. From putting it into practice neither time nor place deterred her. She seldom stayed in a country-house—and she stayed in many—without praying with the servants before she left; even in hotels she had family prayers for the waiters and visitors. With her friends she prayed at every opportunity, nor did she lose a chance with a stranger. Every letter she wrote is full of exhortations to prayer—whether it is written to Mr. Gladstone or to Dr. Jowett—or to her family—or to the *Times*.

If we sometimes feel that in her literalization of religion she loses the stiller and smaller voices; we cannot but honour her faith. Faith, too, is justified by works and her practical activities were manifold.

In 1850, when she was thirty-two, she and her father went to live with her sister and brother-in-law, then rector of Beckenham. Two hundred navvies employed in the erection of the Crystal Palace were lodged in the village. These soon came under her influence and her definite work was begun. At the outbreak of the

Crimean War she set on foot the scheme for providing every soldier who left England with a Testament. At the same time Beckenham was invaded with a fresh influx of working-men, this time belonging to the Army Works Corps, and she spent herself indefatigably among them. She provided them with meals as well as prayer-meetings and became the friend and adviser of myriads. Henceforward the demands on her energies and sympathies increased. She was constantly being asked to address meetings by all and sundry—by her friends, by the governors of prisons, by the Commanders of training ships, by factory owners, by the superintendents of reformatories—and she was never asked in vain. In 1857 began her intercourse with the Cadets of Addiscombe Military College. Echoes from 'The Fairchild Family' and from 'Eric or Little by Little' come back to us as we read of these Sundays at Beckenham Rectory. But here again her spell did not fail and her friendship was warmly returned. Meanwhile her boudoir became a kind of religious consulting-room for all sorts and degrees of people. By now, too, she had begun to write, and the first three of a stream of publications had already appeared. Among them was the life of Hedley Vicars, a young Evangelical, a soldier, and an intimate of her own who fell in action in the Crimea. This book was widely read, and it and 'English Hearts and Hands'—an account of her work among the navvies—once more extended her influence. This influence went on widening to the end of her long life and brought with it new opportunities, and she never lost her power of making and of keeping friends, or her interest in politics and public affairs, though here, of course, her outlook was coloured by her religious views. In 1866, during the cholera outbreak in London, she gained entrance to the hospital wards, where her help was welcomed. The practical outcome of her ministrations was the foundation by her of an orphanage for nearly fifty children left destitute by the scourge and of a Convalescent Home for patients forced to leave the hospital to make room for new cases. It was at this time that she, Mrs. Tait, and Mrs. Gladstone became known in the newspapers as "the three Catherines." She died in 1912 at the age of ninety-four. After her death one of her friends wrote that there was about her "a power as of one who might have done notable things in other fields."

If we are to believe Sir James Barrie, the might-have-been is "of imagination all compact." Nevertheless, as we end the record of her life—a record written with deep and intimate affection—we are tempted to wonder what would have been the result if she had been born two generations later. Freed from the limitations of her day and of her sect, into what wide channels might not her energies have flowed? But perhaps men and women are made for their time. Certainly love and work link all ages, and of these Catherine Marsh gave with both hands.

#### TWO IRISH POETS.

*Reincarnations.* By James Stephens. Macmillan. 3s. 6d. net.

*Last Songs.* By Francis Ledwidge. Herbert Jenkins. 3s. 6d. net.

UNSHARED enthusiasm has ever some element of hollowness about it, not only because to every discoverer silence is an irksome thing, but because, as exploration widens, to attempt no opening of a solitary interest is felt to be tinged with ingratitude. Perhaps it is due to a sense of this that the most delightful pages in 'Reincarnations' are those of the prose note at the end of the volume, vivid as they are with enthusiasm,

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with a desire to share a beauty that has meant much to the poet. He has put into English Irish inspirations of from one to three centuries ago, that none, pleading ignorance, may ignore them or pass them by. Not that the book is one of translations, as Mr. Stephens states expressly: that would be a misdescription. It is the record of a loveliness, culled from the older singers, but transmuted by the writer to his own authentic word and range of thought. "Some of the poems owe no more than a phrase, a line, half a line to the Irish, and around these scraps I have blown a bubble of verse and made my poem." The entire book is fitly expressed in that single sentence.

Thin, yet clear with a note of strength about them, the pages breathe antiquity. To read them is to be irresistibly reminded of the interlude of peacefulness indicated, but usually omitted from, the sagas. Perhaps 'The Coolun' is fullest of this quietude, this sense of an ancient land.

"What if the night be black  
And the air on the mountain chill,  
When the goat lies down in her track  
And all but the fern is still!  
Stay with me, under my coat  
And we will drink our fill  
Of the milk of the white goat.  
Out on the side of the hill."

Yet, steeped as it is in a subtle and elusive sadness, this is but the least side of the poet. With the unfamiliar name something of the sternness of a past age has crept into the verse; the metres have much that is old and elemental about them, they are ominous with tragedy, as in the trenchant end of 'William O'Kelly' with the cruelty of the sea, as in 'Sean O'Cosgair.' But it is the reuttered singing of the older poets that makes the finest work in this volume, a stately sense of the dignity of poetry contrasted with their poverty:

"When I was young,  
Who now am young no more,  
I did not eat things picked up from the shore."

Here is a mood slightly tinged with bitterness, a brooding of all ills save an insult to their calling, united, despite the lessons of experience, with an indignant refusal to believe in a world that would "treat a poet less than daintily."

To leave this volume and to come to 'Last Songs,' by Francis Ledwidge is to turn from a vision, restricted, maybe, but mature, to echoed metres, the fluency of beginnings. "Flute" and "Pipe," though used a hundred times, still kept their freshness in the poet's mind; he writes of birds, bees, a country seen with eyes newly conscious of beauty that have had neither time nor experience to learn expression. Too often neither word nor thought is able to bear the emotion that provoked them. Perhaps 'The Lanawn Shee' with the opening lines:

"Powdered and perfumed the full bee  
Winged heavily across the clover,  
And where the hills were dim with dew,  
Purple and blue the west leaned over."

is the most successful piece in the volume, and a certain prettiness in the songs will commend them to the many who never relinquish the outlook they present. For the rest, they are original rather as a child is who, uttering an obvious phrase, makes of it something personal through sincerity of utterance.

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joined by an American engineer, who, after discussing the damage of the moment, asked, "Say, friend, what's this street?" Since that date such information has become increasingly useful, for London is thronged with Canadians, Australians, and Americans who want to see things and find their way about. They get plenty of well-organised help, but after all they may prefer to use their own brains, and with this "Blue Guide" in hand, they should be able to fill in their time to advantage, satisfy their zeal for antiquity, and find their trains. The detachable Appendix, which explains such details with plans of London and a street index, is an excellent idea. Many Londoners, even, have not grasped the details of the latest tubes, though more instructed than the Lancashire lad whom we met trying to take a train from Baker Street to his home county. Another pleasing feature of this Guide is the entire absence of advertisements, which, however, lucrative, add weight and size to a volume which should be handy. As it is, the Guide can be got into a coat pocket of average size, and the essence of it—the railway section—is quite a slim affair.

In the text, war readjustments and alterations, such as the occupation of the Crystal Palace, are mentioned, but not overdone. We certainly hope that many of the new war buildings in London will disappear as soon as the war is over. On special points the editor has been assisted by experts. Thus, Mr. Collins Baker writes on the National Gallery, and Mr. Arundel Esdaile on the British Museum. It would have been well to state that the Guildhall Library is a pleasant and convenient place for readers, who can get books quicker here than at the British Museum. The special collections, such as those concerning Dickens and Sir Thomas More, are mentioned.

Wherever we have looked for recent additions to London memorials, such as the well-restored house of Dr. Johnson in Gough Square, we have found them duly noted. Comparatively new buildings, like Australia House, are all in the Guide, which also offers clues to those details of vanishing London which are recorded from time to time in *Notes and Queries*, and are otherwise difficult to get hold of. The Strand Palace Hotel of bourgeois magnificence occupies, for instance, the site of Exeter Hall, once famous for "May Meetings" of the religious. We learn where "Booksellers' Row" was, also of shadowy residents made famous in fiction, such as the Osbornes and Sedleys of 'Vanity Fair' in Russell Square, and David Copperfield at the Adelphi. We have always been surprised that the adjacent Adelphi Hotel, formerly Osborne's, does not advertise itself as a Dickensian house. It has lost most of its old Georgian appearance, but it saw on a notable occasion Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Wardle and the Fat Boy, characters whose fame exceeds that of many living knights. The Hummums Hotel, in Covent Garden, recalls in its name the first Turkish Bath in England, as is stated. It should, however, also possess a ghost, which Meredith declared to be "a distinction above titles." Anyway, the ghost, that of Johnson's cousin, the rowdy Parson Ford, was seriously regarded by Johnson. The London County Council of recent years has taken over keenly the work of commemorative tablets started by the Royal Society of Arts, and this Guide shows a similar zeal concerning eminent dwellers in London, some of secondary importance.

The book extends to pleasant regions outside London, such as Epping Forest, of which there is a map, Kew, and the Chess between Rickmansworth and Chenies, a river celebrated by Froude in one of his happiest 'Short Studies.' At Kew it might have been well to note that the Herbaceous Garden is behind a high brick wall, so that many people never see it. Here in one bed one can realise the brotherhood of the tobacco plant and the poisonous nightshades.

Altogether, if the 'Blue Guides' go on as they have begun, they will be a first-class acquisition to the traveller.



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## THREE NOVELS.

*The King of a Day.* By May Wynne. Jarrold. 6s. net.

*The Cossack.* By Valentin Mandelstamm. Translated from the French by Mariette Soman. Jarrold. 5s. net.

*In Russia's Night.* By Olive Garnett. Collins. 6s. net.

ALL three of these books deal directly or indirectly with Russia. An exiled king, a forlorn hope, French preux-chevaliers to lead it, Polish knaves to thwart it—this is the stuff of which historical novels should be made. From it Miss Wynne weaves a stirring story round the figures of the ill-starred King Stanislaus of Poland, and of two French nobles who help him in his efforts to regain the throne. Paul de Caumelle and Pierre d'Aunville are gallant knights, and have the breathless adventures, the hair-breadth escapes, and the romantic love-stories which belong by right to such heroes.

'The Cossack' takes us from past wars to the wars of the present. A Russian peasant girl whose father is betrayed and killed by a German soldier, disguises herself as a youth, and joins the army with the determination to revenge herself on her father's murderer. She becomes the servant of a Cossack officer with whom she falls in love. The story of her quest, of its fulfillment, and of her death, is told mainly in letters written from the officer to his fiancée. The book is a rendering from the French and suffers, as do most of its kind, from translation of the letter rather than of the spirit. Nevertheless, it is graphic and interesting.

The author of 'In Russia's Night' has reproduced faithfully the jerky insistence on detail which seems peculiar to the Russian novel. The story deals with Russian Revolution and is told by an English girl married to a Russian noble of Bohemian tastes. Miss Garnett knows her subject, and in the divergent characters of her story presents us vividly with different aspects of the Russian point of view.

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

It would be a pity if the compliment which is being paid to Mr. Leonard Merrick by his fellows should fail of its purpose in these days of stress. Never before, in this or any other country, has such a tribute been paid to a living novelist, as that a number of writers distinguished in their craft should combine to introduce the collected edition of his works. Mr. Merrick's work has a certain shy reticence, a careful accuracy of diction, and a perfect command of the resources of the writer's art, which put him among the first story-tellers of the day, but we fear that he will never be a "best-seller"; he has deliberately refused the means towards that end. All the more reason why people of taste, among whom the readers of *The Saturday Review* are to be counted, should take the opportunity of enriching their libraries and renewing their acquaintance with one of the greatest living story-tellers.

'Miss Gascoigne,' by Katharine Tynan (Murray, 6s. net), is gentle comedy, the comedy of Goldcup's village, its inhabitants, "foreigners" and native, and of the Lady of the Manor and her love affairs. Miss Gascoigne's neighbours are pleasant people, but the principal interest of the story circles round Amanda Pippin, a very small and dainty person with a passion for tidiness who has a lover in South Africa, Tom Herrick. Tom in the course of years has become an alarmingly great man, both physically and socially, and Amanda has no feeling for him but one of fear mingled with that of her ancient superiority. The comedy works out to its appointed end to the content of every one, including the reader. It is a charming and entertaining love-story.

'The Rise of a Star,' by Edith Ayrton Zangwill (Murray, 6s. net) is a substantial and thoroughly workmanlike piece of writing. It is the story of Joan Vandeleur from birth to marriage. She is the daughter of a millionaire and grand-daughter of an actress, who has been brought up in entire ignorance of the stage, but has inherited from her father strength of character and from her grandmother histrionic ability. Joan finds her way to the stage, and, after a period of waiting and even of starvation, reaches success almost at a bound. Mrs. Zangwill has everything of the story-teller's art except the art of writing, and, if that last grace could be added to her, she might rank among the leading novelists of the day.

The 'Contrat Social' of Rousseau, edited by Professor C. E. Vaughan (Longmans, 5s. net) is a very complete piece of work by one of the greatest living authorities on Rousseau. It contains a correct text, full notes for the use of University students, and an introduction dealing at some length with the ideas of Rousseau with appendices illustrating his influence upon political thought. The volume is brought out under the auspices of the University of Manchester, and is the first of their Modern Language Texts. We would add that a work like the 'Contrat

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Social," which lies at the base of so much of the confused political dreaming of to-day, should be more widely read than it is, and that this edition with its clear type and handy form is particularly fitted for a wider public than the upper forms and university classes for which it is primarily intended.

"Three Aspects of the Russian Revolution," by Emile Vandervelde, translated by Jean E. H. Findlay (Allen & Unwin, 5s. net), with a drawing by Will Rothenstein, is a somewhat optimistic account of the Russian Revolution under the Kerenski government before the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. The most interesting part is the story of how the factories, which had turned out all the managers and foremen, were gradually reinstating them in power under the pressure of necessity. The translator has made a very readable job of her work, but we notice several traces of unfamiliarity with French: "the white flag of the parliamentary party" is a bad shot at "parlementaire," and Clemenceau is endowed with a superfluous accent. While, under present conditions, the work has little interest, it will be of value as chronicling the impressions left by a passing phase of the Revolution on a sympathetic observer. Mr. Rothenstein is not given the credit of his fine drawing of Vandervelde anywhere in the book, as far as we have noticed.

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### THE CITY.

The buoyancy of Stock markets at this critical period in the war is to some extent due to technical conditions. The restrictions on speculation cause prices to advance forcibly when there is any demand and that section of the public which is making money to-day does not discriminate very carefully in its purchases, nor does it count the cost very closely. But, admitting these explanations of current high prices for several classes of securities, there is, underlying everything, a steady confidence in the military and naval position. Were this confidence absent, the money-makers' pockets would close up tightly and securities would become as difficult to sell at any price as they are now difficult to buy. Markets were never more confident than they are to-day.

Conditions in Mexico appear now to be showing definite improvement, and, although it is difficult to see far ahead and impossible to forecast the financial policy of the Government, there can be no doubt that America's entry into the war has had an important, if indirect, influence upon events in Mexico. The existence of a big United States Army has given the Mexicans tough food for reflection, and it looks as if peace may now dwell where turmoil has reigned for the last few years. Men on the spot are best able to judge and their opinion, at any rate in the oil districts around Tampico and Tuxpam, is expressed in a revival of active drilling and a considerable increase in production. Mining operations in various parts are making progress, too, and it may be hoped that the railways, tramways, and other public utilities in which British and American capital is interested will be able to resume work in a practical manner. A great deal of leeway has to be made up before the properties can attain to the conditions prevailing in the days of Porfirio Diaz; but peace in Mexico means prosperity sooner or later, and those who purchase Mexican securities as a lock-up can hardly fail to see a profit in time.

The prevailing prosperity in Egypt caused by the war finds reflection in the report for 1917 of the New Egyptian Co. which declares a dividend of 1s. a share or 6 2-3 per cent. the previous distribution having been 5 per cent. for 1913. The income from estates was £23,390, an increase of £6,730. Land sales totalled 531 feddans and a further 915 feddans were sold later at satisfactory prices which do not figure in the accounts now presented. The financial position is strengthened by the reduction of £32,000 in the company's loans (of which £20,000 has been effected in the current year) and by the repayment of £25,000 of debentures.

Grand Trunks have become active and strong again on hopes that the Canadian Ministers in this country who will discuss the terms for Government purchase of the line will be impressed by the reasonableness of the company's case. A very strong committee has been formed, including members of leading Stock Exchange firms, with the idea of putting before the Government representatives the precise claims of the holders of Grand Trunk securities. This committee has no direct connection with the company, and, while it has no official status, it may be able to emphasise the rights of stockholders in a manner which will add something to the weight of the arguments of the chairman of the company.

Stockholders in the United Railways of the Havana Co. were becoming very impatient with their board. They were aware that in all probability dividends for the year 1917-18 would be paid in scrip instead of cash, the trouble being that an enormous increase in traffic has necessitated the application of profits to capital account. But, as the weeks passed and no announcement was made in regard to the interim distribution, the suspicion arose that the board intended to let the matter slide until October or November, when the annual report becomes due. Urgent representations were made to the board on the matter and it now appears that application was made to the Treasury New Issues Committee on April 30th, for permission to issue fresh capital, excellent reasons for the appeal being set forth. But after six weeks no reply had been received. Doubtless the Committee has many applications to consider, but most of them are simple, clear-cut cases, and, if there is any system at all in dealing with them, it should not take six weeks to decide on the merits of the appeal of a substantial company like the United Havana. It is a pity that the board did not raise money in New York as they might have done before America came into the war.

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The Chairman said: Ladies and gentlemen, in rising to move the adoption of the report circulated amongst the shareholders for this meeting, I presume it is your wish that we may take it as read. You will gather from the first paragraph that in consequence of the delay in arriving at a settlement with the Government Control Authorities upon minor questions relating to excess profits tax, munitions levy, and coal mines control finance, your board are unable to present a balance-sheet and statement of accounts for the past financial year. They regret, therefore, there is no alternative but to adjourn this part of our usual annual proceedings until some future date. There is, however, no need for anxiety, as I am pleased to be able to assure you to-day that this omission by no means prevents your board from dealing with the approximate figures placed before them, and they have come to the conclusion, after making liberal allowance for contingencies, with the sanction of the Treasury and concurrence of our auditors, that they are fully justified in recommending the distribution and confirmation of the dividends as set forth in the report. It is my intention to submit for your adoption the necessary resolution to this effect in due course. Before approaching the more important subjects of to-day's proceedings, I feel it would be agreeable to you have a brief statement concerning the past year's operations; as you may well imagine that our various manufacturing departments and collieries, in common with all controlled establishments, have experienced their full share of anxiety and difficulties. This condition of affairs, however, has not to any serious extent interfered with the steady output of materials and continued improvement of our productive capacity. As a convincing proof of the volume of work executed under these strenuous conditions, I have only to mention that the wages paid to the workmen exceeded all previous records, amounting to over two millions sterling. In addition to this, the company has continued the patriotic grant to the dependents of their officials and workmen who are still gallantly fighting the country's battles, the amount distributed this year being £35,000, bringing up the total since the outbreak of war to the formidable figure of about £150,000. Altogether, after passing through this trying year, we consider the results quite satisfactory. They could not, however, have been attained without the untiring energy and patience of our managing director, Mr. Mills—(hear, hear)—and the loyal staff of officials under him, who have so bravely borne the heat and burden of the day.

As regards the working of our collieries, they have been, and are still, under rigid Government control, but I propose to leave any other matters of interest on this subject in the hands of my colleague, Mr. Beynon, when he rises to second my resolution. As the business we have to bring before you to-day will necessarily take rather longer than is usual at our annual meetings, I have purposely restrained my remarks on the past and come at once to the elaborate scheme set forth in detail in our report for raising the necessary additional capital and adjusting the financial affairs of the company so as to place them on a sound and permanent footing. It is really the outcome of our persistent and vigorous policy of expansion and consolidation which your board have for so many years past strongly advocated, and consider now more than ever an imperative enterprise in order to succeed in maintaining our position in the first rank of iron, steel, and coal producers. It is due to your generous confidence and support in the past that the scheme has matured and grown much quicker than we originally expected; besides, we have to thank our Government administrators for giving it a helping hand by their most sympathetic support and rendering every possible assistance in speeding up our development scheme.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will see from the report in your hands, and in the notices which have been sent out with that report, that we have obtained the sanction of the Treasury for an increase of our capital and debentures to a total nominal amount of £2,000,000, of which £600,000 will be debentures, £800,000 preference shares, and £600,000 ordinary shares. This meeting will be followed by an extraordinary general meeting of the company, and separate meetings of both the preference and ordinary shareholders. Having explained the effect of the resolutions for carrying out the proposals referred to in the report, the Chairman, in conclusion, said they must reflect for a moment upon the perilous position of the iron and steel trade in this country prior to the outbreak of war. It was impossible to forget that the unscrupulous dumping process of the Germans had nearly succeeded in driving our ordinary heavy steel trade on the rocks of ruin. Thank goodness, this incubus was being effectually removed, with no chance of its ever appearing again. Manufacturers could expand without the fear of being stifled by unfair treatment. It, therefore, became more than ever a question of national and vital importance to make up for lost time by encouraging the production of home industries. He wished particularly to emphasise the fact that they would be the first establishment in South Wales producing steel entirely independently of foreign imports of raw materials. (Applause.) The board were particularly anxious to emphasise the advantage of their enterprising scheme of expansion, and whilst we may be hampered and restricted at the moment by war conditions, there is no time like the present to prepare by every means in our power towards rendering a helping hand in the economic recovery from the wastage of his great war, and of such national and vital importance to the future welfare of this country, and as an assured protection to our own future prosperity and that of the rising

generation. With these few remarks, gentlemen, I beg to ask my colleague, Mr. Beynon, to second the resolution, which I now beg to move, namely, "That the directors' report be approved and adopted." (Applause.)

Mr. John W. Beynon said: Ladies and gentlemen, I rise to second the resolution which has been proposed by our chairman, Sir Charles Allen. As the director most intimately connected with the colliery side of your undertaking, I would just say a few words as regards the collieries. As all shareholders are aware, it is of vital importance to all collieries, and more particularly to South Wales collieries, to be able to rely on regular working for profitable production. Unfortunately, the activities of German submarines during the year under discussion have very considerably interfered with the regular supply of tonnage, with the result that, in common with most Monmouthshire collieries, your collieries have suffered a very considerable amount of lost time, with the result that the cost of production has very materially increased. It is no doubt within the remembrance of shareholders that some time ago the Government granted to all workmen employed in collieries a war bonus of 1s. 6d. a day, which bonus was paid whether there was work at the colliery or whether the colliery was idle. Naturally, with the irregular working the incidence of that war bonus very considerably increased the cost of production. I am glad to say that now the British Navy has successfully grappled with the submarine menace—(hear, hear)—the supply of tonnage has for the past two months been adequate for our requirements, with the result that your collieries have been able to work full time, and so long as your collieries have regular work they will be a satisfactory and remunerative property. I may say that the output of all your collieries has for some time past been strictly controlled by the Government; the bulk of the production is being taken by the British Government either for use in his Majesty's Navy or for use among the consumers of Great Britain and by the Governments of our Allies, leaving but a very small portion for sale in neutral countries.

Your chairman has touched lightly on the many developments which are now taking place at Ebbw Valley. Unfortunately, your directors are not permitted to go too fully into the developments which are taking place; I will merely say that those developments are part of a well-considered policy which had been adopted by this board some time ago, and are merely being speeded up to meet the requirements of the Government and the exigencies of the war. Naturally, those developments necessitated a large increase in capital outlay, and in considering this issue your directors had in mind the keeping of a proper balance between debentures, preference issue, and ordinary share capital. With the vastly increased value of your assets this company could reasonably carry a larger amount of debenture and preference issue, but it would hardly be fair to ask the holders of those securities to allow a large amount to be placed *pari passu* with their present holdings unless you offered them some inducement to consent to the proposition. That inducement consisted of raising the interest on the debentures from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. per annum, and on the preference shares from 6 per cent. to 7 per cent. per annum, and the fact that your board have received a very great and unexpectedly large amount of support from all classes of shareholders proves to them that the scheme that they have the honour of placing before you has met with the general approval of the shareholders of the company. (Hear, hear.) Those shareholders who have been associated with this company in the past will remember the time when the credit of this company stood none too high; when the shares were quoted in the market at a heavy discount; when the development of this company was handicapped by lack of credit, and, possibly, by lack of courage and imagination on the part of previous boards; when your directors came to you year after year with none too happy a story to place before you, and when, I fear, they received but scant consideration from the shareholders for the very difficult position they found themselves in. To-day your shares stand at a substantial premium; your credit stands high; your assets, which have been valued on a pre-war valuation, are shown to be about £1,500,000 more in value than what they stand at to-day in your books; your company is developing in many ways owing to spirited and progressive management, and I am confident that those expansions are all well considered and all tend to greater commercial prosperity and financial stability.

Proceeding, the speaker said: If Labour will play the part in the future that it has in the troublous times of war through which we are now passing I believe we may look forward to a time of great industrial expansion and prosperity. If this war has taught us one thing, it has taught us that it is impossible to raise the standard of wages beyond the economic level. And if by stress of circumstances that level is passed, then the cost of all vital necessities of life so rises as to render valueless to the worker the increased wages which he has received.

A discussion followed. One of the shareholders urged all the new capital should be raised by means of an increase in the ordinary capital. Sir James Murray, however, urged that the policy adopted by the directors was a wise one, and that the increases in the rates of the debenture and preference interest were quite reasonable in the present circumstances and in view of the fact that the Government was raising money at quite 5 per cent. No body of directors would dream of raising £2,000,000 of capital without the safeguard of underwriting. Mr. Beynon explained that the increase in the rates of interest to the debenture and preference holders was necessary in view of the increase of capital.

The resolution for the adoption of the report was unanimously carried, and at an extraordinary general meeting the necessary resolutions embodying the increase in capital from £1,600,000 to £3,700,000 were carried.

At separate meetings of the preference and ordinary shareholders the necessary resolutions in connection with the increased capital were adopted.

## MOTOR NOTES.

We have so frequently referred to the misuse of Motor Spirit that we feel almost apologetic for reverting to the subject once again. The Daily Press have recently taken up what they call "The Petrol Mystery," and some of their correspondents appear to have discovered only now that a great many people are burning fuel without the least moral or legal justification. That petrol is being used illegitimately all over the country is unfortunately so notorious a fact that there seems to be very little mystery about it. Pro-German propagandists, politicians, *et hoc genus omne*, obtain as much fuel as they require for their baneful activities, while the cars of honest men are laid by for want of petrol.

It is obvious that there are plenty of retailers willing to risk prosecution for the sake of the profits, and plenty of car owners who are deliberately hiring out their cars knowing that they are to be used for unauthorised purposes. What is something of a mystery is the laxity of the authorities. We cannot suppose that our rulers of the new regime propose to plead the supine example of their predecessors, and trust that they speedily turn their attention to the abuse.

It is quite possible that much of this free from duty petrol comes from the west of Ireland, where many ships conveying the precious fuel have been sunk. Needless to say, it is illegal to appropriate this harvest of the sea, but that does not prevent the fishermen and the farmers taking possession of it when they can do so safely. In many places large stocks are buried for Post-War consumption, but the finders have succeeded in selling a good deal of it, mostly at ridiculously low prices. There are rumours even of motor traders having made large purchases, and in one case it is stated that practically every car owner living in the district had secured substantial supplies except the R.M.

I have little sympathy with the suggestion that the Trade should produce a Black List containing the names of Motor Car owners who unreasonably contest the charges made by repairers.

Undoubtedly, there is a small proportion of motorists who are most unreasonable; they are generally hopelessly ignorant as to the cost of repairs and renewals, and not only protest against the charges in question, but warn their friends against the firms which have carried out these repairs.

A black list, however, is absurd. There is, of course, another side to the question which should not be overlooked. There are also rapacious Garage proprietors who are apt to play on the ignorance of their customers, and to make unjustified charges in cases where they think that the owner is not able to form an opinion as to what the cost ought to be. It will seem, therefore, that any agitation in the direction of forming a Black List of Car Owners might result in a Black List for Garage Owners.

In my own experience, I have found that Garage proprietors are reasonable in their charges, especially in the case of regular customers. Once or twice I have been badly had in the early days, but never in more modern times. In most cases, the work requiring to be done has been carefully explained to me, so as to give me an idea of the expense. There was one case in particular of a very inaccessible engine which brought this home to me. It needed cleaning, which necessitated dismantling, and the job proved a lengthy and troublesome one. The crux was to replace the lower piston ring; a special tool had to be made for the purpose, and some hours were spent before the feat was accomplished. Some weeks afterwards I happened to mention the matter to a trade friend, a skilled mechanic, who happened to have had a good deal of experience in the type of car, and he told me that, under similar circumstances, he broke four piston rings before he succeeded in making the replacement.

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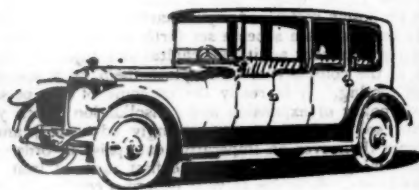
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## FINANCIAL POSITION STRENGTHENED.

THE TWENTIETH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of Lipton, Ltd., was held on June 13th at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, E.C., Sir Thomas J. Lipton, Bart., K.C.V.O. (chairman of the company), presiding.

After inviting the Deputy-Chairman (Mr. C. Williamson Milne) to fully explain the figures of the accounts, the Chairman said:— "I feel that the results as disclosed by those figures have received your approval. We state in our report that the company's business has again shown considerable expansion, and I shall not be giving away any secrets when I tell you that our turnover has increased by millions of pounds sterling. (Applause.) I had occasion last year to point out that our larger sales had followed our policy of selling goods of the highest quality at the lowest prices, and I am able to state that the soundness of that policy has been confirmed and emphasised during the past year. We make an important statement in our report—namely, that the actual rate per cent. of profit earned has been lower than in the previous year, which means that we have been selling our goods at a still smaller margin of profit, and that the largely increased business which has resulted from that policy has not only made up for the lower rate per cent. of profit, but by the greater volume of business done has substantially increased our earnings and enabled us to show you still better results than we put before you last year. (Hear, hear.)"

As the largest retail distributors of tea, provisions and groceries in the world, we have naturally come under the operations of the various restrictions and limitations of the Ministry of Food. These restrictions have entailed a large amount of work, so much so that we have set up a separate department with a solicitor in charge in order to instruct and support our numerous branches in the carrying out of the Food Control Orders. I am glad to be able to add my testimony to the benefit that the control regulations have been, not only to those who patronise this business, but to the community at large, by wisely conserving, as far as can be consistently done, the stocks and supplies of food.

Our foreign trade has been considerably curtailed by the prohibition of export of food products, but any shortcomings in this direction have been more than compensated for by the expansion of our Eastern trade. We are making special arrangements to meet the conditions arising from the war operations, which now extend to both hemispheres, by which we can conserve as far as possible our world-wide connection. The development of our Egyptian business has continued. In addition to our branches established in Alexandria and Port Said we have opened in Cairo a large café, restaurant and tea gardens, which have already become very popular. Also, under the control of the manager of our Egyptian business, we have, by the kind permission of the military authorities, opened a branch in Jerusalem, where, you will be glad to hear, we are doing excellent business, and we are taking business premises in Jaffa which we have good reason to believe will also prove successful. (Applause.) We have also taken special steps to develop our Australian and New Zealand trade and have lately sent out a new manager from our head office staff, whose efforts are producing good results. The maintenance of our plantations in Ceylon has received care and attention as hitherto, but, as you are no doubt aware, the crop results on the island generally have not been so satisfactory during the last year, and again the prices have been lower.

I want now to refer to the goods we make ourselves. Our many home factories have been taxed to their utmost capacity, and with the increased demand for the high quality goods for which your company has earned so great a reputation, we have proved once again the wisdom of doing our own manufacturing whenever possible. (Hear, hear.) As soon as opportunity offers we propose to extend and add to our factories because the millions of our customers and their demands for goods bearing the Lipton brand are increasing daily, and our means of distribution have now become so large that we can extend the list of articles that we produce ourselves. This is most satisfactory from the point of view of quality. (Hear, hear.)

It is now my pleasurable duty to deal with the figures of the divisible profit—namely, £245,949—which is left after placing to our general reserve account the sum of £100,000 as the allocation for the year under review. I am quite sure all will see the wisdom of building up our general reserve. (Hear, hear.) We paid on the 31st of March last a dividend on the preference shares for the half-year ended on the date which amounted to £25,000, and we recommend that there be placed to war contingencies reserve account a further sum of £25,000, bringing up that account to £50,000. I am sure you will all agree that it is sound policy to protect the future of the business in every way we possibly can. We propose to dispose of £106,250 in paying a final dividend of 8½ per cent. on the ordinary shares, making, with the 4 per cent. distributed by way of interim dividend, a total of 12½ per cent. for the year. (Applause.) We further recommend that there be set aside to pension fund a sum of £15,000. Shareholders will doubtless recollect that last year £10,000 was voted to form the nucleus of this fund, and we commend to your favourable consideration the allocation this year of an additional £15,000. (Applause.) There still remains, as a balance to carry forward, £74,699, which is slightly larger than the amount brought into the account from last year. This balance forward is subject to the payment of excess profits tax, the amount of which we are unable at present to state.

I have much pleasure in moving:—"That the report and statement of accounts, as submitted, be received, approved, and adopted."

Mr. H. L. Peters (managing director) seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

## CALCUTTA TRAMWAYS.

## CURRENT RECEIPTS SHOW SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT.

THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Calcutta Tramways Company, Limited, was held on June 17th, at 1, Queen Victoria Street, E.C., Sir Henry Kimber, Bart. (the chairman), presiding.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said that the gross traffic and sundry receipts amounted to £242,820. The working expenses were £118,739, leaving a balance of £124,080. After adding interest on investments and deposits, less interest on loans, income-tax, and loss on sale of investments, adding the balance forward from the 1916 accounts, and deducting the debenture and preference interest and the interim dividend paid, there remained an available balance of £72,575. During the year they had spent on capital account £504, which represented the cost of a new motor lorry. Then they had to the credit of capital account £8,550, which was made up of the original cost of the Diesel set sold during the year as being of no further use to them, owing to the changes in their Nonapookur plant, and the cost of rails taken up in Gallat Street utilised for renewal work, owing to the impossibility of obtaining fresh supplies, the single track remaining being sufficient for their purpose as a depot connection only. The revenue account showed a falling off of only £31 in the traffic receipts, due to the reduction in the mileage which they were called upon to make before they could obtain Government authority for procuring supplies necessary for carrying on the system. With regard to the Indian working expenses, the power expenses were about the same as in the previous year. The traffic expenses showed a small increase, due to extra superintendence and the enhanced cost of stores. The Indian income-tax had not been included this year in these expenses, but was shown with English income-tax paid in the appropriation of profits. The loss on the sale of investments of £3,187 was due to the sale of the company's holding of India Two and a-Half per Cent. stock and investing the proceeds in the purchase of Great Indian Peninsular Annuities Class "B." They did this for the reason that while the Indian Two and a-Half per Cent. stock was redeemable only at the Government option the Great Indian Peninsular Annuities, which cost them only £15 per £1 of annuity, had the benefit of a sinking fund calculated on the basis of 2½ per cent. to pay them off at about £26. 2s. per £1, so that they were sure ultimately of making good the depreciation on the original holding.

The directors proposed to deal with the net available balance by the payment of a final dividend of 5s. 6d. per share, making 8 per cent. for the year, free of income-tax, equivalent to a little more than 9½ per cent., less tax, paid last year, the transfer of £25,000 to the reserve for depreciation, etc., increasing the total of this account to £100,357, the contribution of £1,298 to the staff provident fund, and the carrying forward of the balance of £8,434, subject to excess profits duty and Indian super-tax not yet ascertained.

Mr. John G. B. Stone seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously, and the dividend recommended was declared, payable on 21st instant.

## CHANNEL TUNNEL.

## "A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF BRITISH BULL-DOG TENACITY."

AN ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Channel Tunnel Company, Ltd., was held on June 17th at the Cannon Street Hotel, Baron Emile B. d'Erlanger presiding.

The Secretary (Mr. H. D. Heckels) having read the auditor's report,

The Chairman said: Ladies and gentlemen,—the characteristics of a nation are the sum total of the idiosyncrasies of its citizens. The bull-dog tenacity of the British nation pulled it through the seventeen years' struggle of the last century and carried it to ultimate victory. Let us be hopeful and confident that, fighting to-day side by side with the heroic French nation, our fundamental quality will achieve the same result and in a lesser time. (Hear, hear.) The steadfastness of purpose of the British citizen is displayed in civil life as well as in the pursuits of war, and the victories of peace are achieved by the same unwavering purpose of mind. No more striking example of British bull-dog tenacity in civil life has been given than by that small group of men who, for some fifty years, have made the construction of the Channel Tunnel their battle-cry, and who have succeeded in enlisting the majority of the nation and the very élite of its thinkers under their banner. This is no time for discouragement; we must not swerve from our set purpose. Peace will rise upon this world again, and with it the day of the construction of the Channel Tunnel will dawn. I have much pleasure in formally moving the adoption of the report and accounts.

Mr. George Howard seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously, and the retiring director (Mr. G. Howard) was re-elected.

Mr. Walford proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and directors, seconded by Mr. Igglesden and unanimously accorded.

The Chairman said that the directors deeply appreciated this kind expression on the part of the meeting. He wished to add that when he had spoken of the "small group of men" who had kept the flag flying he did not want to take the credit for this to the board; it was the shareholders who had supported them throughout this long struggle, and who were ultimately going to reap the benefit of that struggle, whom he congratulated upon their constancy and patience.



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